

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

School of Communication

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

EFFECTIVE AS OF

August 2025

This handbook is for current graduate students in the School of Communication at Western Michigan University. This guide is a supplement to, not a substitute for, the University Graduate Catalog. Policies of the university are current as of the date of this publication, but are subject to change.

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Western Michigan University

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

MISSION STATEMENT

*We are committed to the research and advanced study of the art
and science of communication
in a way that integrates theory and practice.
In our scholarship and teaching we seek to promote a
culture that values diverse perspectives
and emphasizes the ethical implications of communication.*

ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP: THE PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK OF GRADUATE EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

The Master of Arts program in Communication at Western Michigan University embraces the philosophy of engaged scholarship. This philosophy grounds our theory and research in a practical effort to address the challenges we face in our personal relationships, our organizations, our communities, our society, and in the global community. We wish to produce knowledge and scholarship that makes a difference and also bridges differences to reveal common ground to accomplish our common goals.

Our program is designed for persons intending to pursue careers in both academic and non-academic settings. Current graduate students include full-time students planning to enter doctoral programs and full-time students planning to enter careers in business, government, or non-profit organizations. The program also includes part-time students seeking to expand their knowledge of communication for the purpose of career advancement.

PROGRAM GOALS

- Understand the communication research literature and be able to apply it to academic and professional contexts.
- Understand research methods and their application in academic and professional contexts.
- Understand the basic ethical and philosophical principles that guide communication practice.
- Demonstrate competence in seeking, analyzing, and using data / information in decision making processes.
- Communicate effectively using the language of the communication discipline for research , and practice.

THE MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION

The Master of Arts in Communication provides a foundation in communication theory and research and emphasizes intra/interdisciplinary connections in applied contexts. Thirty hours/10 courses of graduate credit and completion of a capstone experience are required for graduation.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Students must complete the University application and must satisfy university admission requirements. Students applying to the Communication master's degree program must have completed a bachelor's degree with at least a 3.0 grade point average in their last two years of course work. Undergraduate transcripts, graduate transcripts where applicable, a resume or curriculum vitae (CV), and a written statement of academic and personal interest (500-1500 words) are required.

ADMISSION STATUS CATEGORIES

Students making application to the master's program in Communication may be considered for admission in one of the categories described below. Students who are admitted in any category other than General Admission are responsible for understanding the terms of their admission and are responsible for seeking a change of admission status when the terms of their admission have been met.

General Admission: Meets the admission requirements of the University and the School of Communication. All required materials have been received. Enrollment in courses is expected to lead to a degree.

Conditional Admission: Meets some of the admission requirements of the University and School of Communication. Continued enrollment in courses at WMU is conditional upon the applicant completing academic course work at a performance level specified at the time the Conditional Admission (CA) status is granted. Typically, in the School of Communication, a conditionally admitted student will be required to obtain a grade of B or better in the first nine credit hours of graduate work to include COM 6010. The time period for any Conditional Admission status may not exceed one year from the time of initial CA status. After that time period, if the specified conditions have been met, the applicant is admitted into General Admission status.

Non-degree Admission: Is eligible for enrollment in courses with the understanding that course work taken as a non-degree admission student is for: (a) a certificate program, (b) self-instructional courses, or (c) enrollment as a guest student. Such course work usually will not apply to a WMU degree program. If the non-degree admitted student subsequently decides to apply to a specific WMU degree program after his/her non-degree enrollment, the applicant will be expected to meet all University and program-specific admission requirements. The time period for any single Non-degree Admission status may not exceed four years from the time such status is granted.

Not Admitted: Is not eligible for enrollment in courses or academic programs at WMU. Applicants who receive the Not Admitted status may reapply after one full calendar year for reconsideration for admission at the University.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Below are the program requirements for students. Specific course descriptions can be found online at <https://wmich.edu/registrar/catalogs> Access the descriptions identified by your catalog year(s).

COMMUNICATION FOUNDATION (3 HOURS)

COM 6010: Introduction to Communication Theory and Research

COMMUNICATION RESEARCH TOOLS (6 HOURS)

COM 6020: Quantitative Communication Research

COM 6050: Qualitative Communication Research

PATHWAY COURSES & ELECTIVES (15-21 HOURS)

Students will choose one pathway--academic advancement or professional advancement--reflecting an area of concentration, in consultation with a faculty advisor.

COGNATES & CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

Master's degree students must complete a capstone experience in partial fulfillment of their requirements for graduation. *Options and requirements are discussed below and vary based on admittance term (i.e., before or after Fall 2024).*

Students admitted PRIOR to Fall 2024

Students may incorporate up to six hours of coursework outside the department (i.e. cognates) into their program of study with advisor approval.

The capstone experience shall consist of completion of a Master's thesis, professional project or comprehensive exams.

Thesis option: The thesis project consists of completion of a research paper in which the student proposes and tests new ideas, replicates an existing study, or advances theoretical understanding of an issue. The thesis must demonstrate scholarly abilities, including solid conceptualization, analysis, and writing. The thesis must clearly define the problem to be investigated, demonstrate mastery of relevant academic literature, and show competence in the relevant methodology and analysis techniques. The thesis shall consist of six credit hours and shall be considered part of the communication electives.

Professional Project option: The professional project requires the development, enactment, and assessment of an applied communication experience. The professional project may involve workshops, case studies, training, creation of websites, communication assessments or completion of other projects within the context of the student's chosen area of study. The professional project shall consist of three credit hours and shall be considered part of communication electives.

Comprehensive Examination option (0 hours): The comprehensive examination option requires the student to demonstrate his/her knowledge of a substantive area within communication and to demonstrate a capacity to integrate theory, research, and practice in response to comprehensive questions developed by the faculty of the School of Communication.

Student BEGINNING in or after Fall 2024

Students may incorporate up to three hours of coursework outside the department (i.e. cognates) into their program of study with advisor approval.

The capstone experience shall consist of completion of a Master's thesis, professional project or coursework.

Thesis option & Professional Project option – see above

Coursework option: The coursework option is for the student who desires to take as

many standard communication courses as possible to build their mastery of the discipline and do so within a structured, faculty-led environment with student peers. It requires the student to complete six additional credit hours as electives

ACCELERATED GRADUATE DEGREE IN COMMUNICATION

The Accelerated Graduate Degree Program (AGDP) in Communication allows students to begin accumulating credits towards completion of a master's degree while still enrolled as undergraduates. Undergraduate students admitted to the Communication AGDP, with senior standing, may take up to 12 credit hours of designated 5000 and 6000 level courses for graduate credit. These designated courses may be used in completion of both the Bachelor's degree and the Master's degree.

DEGREE HOURS

An undergraduate degree in communication requires a total of 122 credit hours. The Master's in Communication requires a total of 30 credit hours. Students enrolling in the AGDP for the maximum 12 graduate credits would earn 140 total undergraduate and graduate credits in contrast to the typical combined 152 undergraduate and graduate credit hours under the usual progression to degree(s).

Students would pay undergraduate tuition for these 6000 level courses as undergraduates and the courses will be included in the flat tuition rate. On completion of the undergraduate degree, the student will be re-classified as a graduate student and then will pay graduate tuition rates.

ELIGIBILITY FOR APPLICATION

This program is open to undergraduate students in all of the communication majors.

A student must have senior status and must have earned a minimum of 15 credit hours at Western Michigan University and have completed at least 18 credit hours in their major at Western Michigan University or at another institution.

Undergraduate students enrolled in the AGDP will be expected to meet graduate expectations in their graduate courses.

Students who have received their baccalaureate degrees will be ineligible to apply for this program and retroactively claim credits to apply toward the MA degree.

The student must meet the established Master's program admission criteria:

1. An undergraduate minimum GPA of 3.5
2. At least 18 credit hours earned at WMU or at another institution
3. A written statement of academic and personal interest (500-1500) words admission to AGDP
4. A resume or curriculum vita (CV)

ADMISSION PROCEDURE

1. As early as possible in the academic junior year, the potential AGDP student should contact the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss this AGDP option and review the requirements, timelines, and application procedures.
2. Meet with the undergraduate academic advisor to review current and anticipated credit hour status and make arrangements to conduct a pre-graduation audit.
3. The student must complete his/her undergraduate audit with the College of Arts and Sciences advising office staff.

4. Students must submit an online application for admission to the graduate program with the Office of Admissions/Graduate Admissions and must complete the necessary application materials for admission to the Master's program in the School of Communication.
5. Upon acceptance to the AGDP, the School of Communication approves a conditional admission to the graduate program pending completion of the bachelor's degree. The effective term of admission to the graduate program is the term following the anticipated receipt of the bachelor's degree.
6. Upon acceptance to the AGDP, the student must meet together with the Director of Graduate Studies and the Undergraduate Academic Advisor to prepare an appropriate program of study that meets the requirements for the undergraduate and graduate degrees. Student will complete the AGDP Course Approval form (FORM ADGP) with the Graduate Director as temporary graduate advisor. This form must be sent to the Registrar's office along with the undergraduate audit from College of Arts and Sciences.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY AND GRADUATION

1. It is expected that the baccalaureate degree will be awarded within one calendar year after initial AGDP enrollment. Students not meeting this time constraint must re-apply to be admitted to the graduate program. In order to move automatically into the graduate program, the student must achieve a grade of "B" or better in each of the graduate courses being counted for the undergraduate degree. Students who do not meet this requirement will have the earned grade applied to their undergraduate degree only and must apply for readmission into the graduate program. Students who complete the undergraduate degree including a "B" or above in the specified graduate courses will be admitted as graduate students (with the graduate credit) in the next semester or session after receiving the bachelor's
2. A student in the AGDP must follow the program of study developed with the Graduate Director and the undergraduate advisor. Failure to follow this program of study may result in ineligibility for the AGDP.
3. A student completing the undergraduate degree with a GPA within the major of less than 3.0 will be automatically declared ineligible for the AGDP.
4. Students must complete the requirements for the MA degree within 24 months from the completion of the bachelor's degree. Students unable to meet this requirement must apply for an extension with the Graduate Director.
5. Students who have completed the Accelerated Graduate Degree Program will have it noted on their undergraduate and graduate transcript.
6. Any student who becomes ineligible to continue participation in the AGDP will be notified in writing by the Graduate Director.

WITHDRAWAL

A student may at any time withdraw from the AGDP by informing the Graduate Director in writing. A copy of the request to withdraw must be sent to the Graduate Registrar.

AGDP ELIGIBLE COURSES

5000 level courses

COM 5600: Teaching Communication

6000 level courses

COM 6010 Introduction to Communication Inquiry
 COM 6020 Qualitative Communication Research
 COM 6050 Qualitative Communication Research
 COM 6400 Seminar in Mass Communication
 COM 6430 Communication Strategic Planning and Innovation
 COM 6450 Mass Communication
 COM 6700 Seminar in Interpersonal Communication
 COM 6730 - Conflict Management
 COM 6740 Interpersonal Communication
 COM 6830 Power and Leadership
 COM 6800 Seminar in Organizational Communication
 COM 6820 Organizational Communication

4+1 Hope College – WMU Partnership

Starting in Fall 2024, this partnership allows Hope students to earn both their bachelor's and master's degrees in as little as five years. Hope College students can transfer up to six undergraduate credit hours towards a Master of Arts in Communication degree at WMU. Additionally, Hope students have the opportunity to obtain up to six additional graduate credit hours through prior learning assessment (PLA).

ADMISSION PROCEDURE

1. As early as possible in the academic junior or senior year, Hope students should contact the director of graduate studies for the WMU School of Communication to discuss this option and review the requirements, timelines and application procedures.
2. Meet with Hope undergraduate academic advisor to review current and anticipated credit hour status and identify what courses will qualify for transfer and prior learning assessment.
3. Apply for admission to the master's program in the School of Communication.
4. Upon acceptance, meet with the director of graduate studies to prepare an appropriate program of study that includes the course credits to transfer in as electives and the course credits that will count through prior learning assessment and to be advised on their first semester courses.
5. If adding credits through prior learning assessment (COM 7100 and/or COM 7120), share the content with the director of graduate studies for review by the graduate committee. Upon approval, these credits will count as electives to the master's degree.
6. A letter listing which undergraduate graduate courses will be counted in the master's degree will be sent to the student and will be included in the graduate file.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Complete the University application and satisfy university admission requirements;
- An undergraduate minimum GPA of 3.0 from Hope College;
- Undergraduate transcripts from Hope College;
- A resume or curriculum vitae (CV); and
- A written statement of academic and personal interest (500-1500 words).

ADMISSION DEADLINES

Application for admission for the Fall term must be submitted by April 1 of the preceding school year, and for the Spring term, August 1 of the preceding school year.

ELIGIBLE HOPE COLLEGE COURSES

Transferable Credits (up to 6 credits, must have earned a B grade or better)

- COMM 320 – Family Communication
- COMM 330 – Organizational Communication
- COMM 335 – Leadership Skills and Perspectives
- COMM 360 – The Art and Science of Persuasion
- COMM 371 – Intercultural Communication: Communicating Across Differences
- COMM 372 – Gender Communication

Prior Learning Assessment (up to 6 credits, based on the evaluation of final deliverables)

- COMM 399 – Communication Internship
- COMM 451 – Media Theory
- COMM 460 – Communication Theory
- COMM 463 – Rhetorical Theory
- COMM 470 – Cultural Communication Theory

COM 399 credit hours will be counted as COMM 7120 Professional Field Experience. COMM 660, COMM 463, and COMM 470 will be counted as COM 7100 Independent Research. COMM 460 will not replace WMU's COM 6010; Introduction to Communication Theory and Research is required in order to complete a master's of arts in communication at WMU.

The WMU School of Communication will determine the basis for evaluation and awarding of prior learning credit.

4+1 Albion College – WMU Partnership

Starting in Fall 2025, this partnership allows Albion students to earn both their bachelor's and master's degrees in as little as five years. Albion College students can transfer up to six undergraduate credit hours towards a Master of Arts in Communication degree at WMU. Additionally, Albion students have the opportunity to obtain up to six additional graduate credit hours through prior learning assessment (PLA).

ADMISSION PROCEDURE

7. As early as possible in the academic junior or senior year, Albion students should contact the director of graduate studies for the WMU School of Communication to discuss this option and review the requirements, timelines and application procedures.
8. Meet with Albion undergraduate academic advisor to review current and anticipated credit hour status and identify what courses will qualify for transfer and prior learning assessment.
9. Apply for admission to the master's program in the School of Communication.
10. Upon acceptance, meet with the director of graduate studies to prepare an appropriate program of study that includes the course credits to transfer in as electives and the course credits that will count through prior learning assessment and to be advised on their first semester courses.

11. If adding credits through prior learning assessment (COM 7100 and/or COM 7120), share the content with the director of graduate studies for review by the graduate committee. Upon approval, these credits will count as electives to the master's degree.
12. A letter listing which undergraduate graduate courses will be counted in the master's degree will be sent to the student and will be included in the graduate file.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Complete the University application and satisfy university admission requirements;
- An undergraduate minimum GPA of 3.0 from Albion College;
- Undergraduate transcripts from Albion College;
- A resume or curriculum vitae (CV); and
- A written statement of academic and personal interest (500-1500 words).

ADMISSION DEADLINES

Application for admission for the Fall term must be submitted by April 1 of the preceding school year, and for the Spring term, August 1 of the preceding school year.

ELIGIBLE ALBION COLLEGE COURSES

Transferable Credits (up to 6 credits, must have earned a B grade or better)

- COMM 301 – Biosensor Mkt Research
- COMM 306 – Public Relations
- COMM 308 – Health Disparities
- COMM 309 – Sports Marketing
- COMM 311 – Environmental Communication
- COMM 312 – Political Communication
- COMM 330 – Advertising

Prior Learning Assessment (up to 6 credits, based on the evaluation of final deliverables)

- COMM 392 – Internship
- COMM 412 – Directed Study

COM 392 credit hours will be counted as COMM 7120 Professional Field Experience and COMM 412 will be counted as COM 7100 Independent Research.

The WMU School of Communication will determine the basis for evaluation and awarding of prior learning credit.

GRADUATE ADVISING

ADVISING AND THE DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The Director of Graduate Studies in the School of Communication is responsible for overseeing the activities of the graduate program. Pre-enrollment and first semester course enrollment advising for all students are part of that responsibility. The Graduate Director serves as the temporary advisor for all AGDP students in the dual-enrolled year. During the application and admission process, students should direct their inquiries to the Director by email (com-grad@wmich.edu). The Director of Graduate Studies also is available for general advising to all

current students.

THE TEMPORARY ADVISOR

All newly admitted Master's students are assigned a temporary advisor by the Director of Graduate Studies. The temporary advisor must have graduate faculty status. The temporary advisor is responsible to direct the student's choices of second semester courses and to offer guidance to the student in the selection of a permanent advisor. Typically, this should entail a brief conversation/meeting/email exchange. Some students may need more communication.

The temporary advisor's name and contact information are mailed to each entering graduate student in their first semester. The temporary advisor is to be used for only one semester by full-time students. Part-time students may continue to seek the advice of their temporary advisor until they enroll in their twelfth credit hour.

SELECTION OF PERMANENT ADVISOR

All students are expected to select a permanent advisor prior to the completion of 12 credit hours. The student may select the temporary advisor as his/her advisor, if he/she agrees. Students should file **Form I: Request for Permanent Advisor and Capstone Plan** with the Director of Graduate Studies to record the selection of a permanent advisor. An advisor should be chosen by the student based on a match between the student and faculty advisor's substantive areas of interest, work styles, etc. Students are NOT limited to faculty members with whom they have had courses. The permanent advisor must have graduate faculty status. For students choosing the thesis capstone option, it is recommended that the permanent advisor also be the thesis advisor. The student and the advisor should consult as soon as possible regarding two other thesis committee members, who also have graduate faculty status.

The permanent advisor is charged with:

- Advising the student on coursework appropriate for the student's substantive area of interest.
- Helping the student choose a capstone option and committee members.
- Monitoring the student's academic progress and reporting annually on that progress to the Graduate Director.
- Determining the readiness of the student for the capstone experience and mentoring the student in his/her performance of the chosen capstone.
- Advising the student regarding relevant university and departmental policies, procedures, and documentation.

PLANNING YOUR MASTER'S PROGRAM OF STUDY

Preparing a Permanent Program of Study requires the graduate student to make three choices.

1. The student must select a permanent advisor and file the necessary form.
2. The student, in consultation with the permanent advisor, must select a set of courses that fulfill the requirements of the degree.
3. The student, in consultation with the permanent advisor, must decide which capstone experience he/she wishes to complete to fulfill the requirements of the degree and dependent on the student's admission year. The student and the advisor should complete and file **Form II: Permanent Program**.
4. Prior to registration each semester, the graduate student should consult with his/her advisor (temporary or permanent) to gain approval for the courses selected and to

review the Permanent Program as planned. All course selections should be made in consultation with an advisor.

THE PERMANENT PROGRAM & FORMS

A Graduate Student Permanent Program of Study lists all courses and other requirements necessary for completion of the degree program. It is useful for students and advisors to use the form as a guide for ongoing advising. *All forms referenced in this handbook can be found at <https://wmich.edu/communication/academics/graduate/forms>.*

The Graduate Student Permanent Program of Study (**Form II**) is signed by the graduate student and his/her advisor and the program must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Director of the School of Communication. The Permanent Program is filed in the Registrar's Office with the appropriate graduate auditor at the time of application for graduation. Students are responsible for checking the deadlines for each term's graduation.

Changes to the Permanent Program should be made in consultation with the student's permanent advisor. Any changes made after the Permanent Program has been filed with the auditor should be reported to the Director of Graduate Studies using **Form III: Request for Modification of Permanent Program**. The Director of Graduate Studies then will report such changes to the auditor.

FULL- AND PART-TIME STUDENT STATUS

Full-time graduate students must enroll in a minimum of six (6) credit hours each fall and spring semester, while three (3) credit hours constitutes part-time status. In Summer I and Summer II sessions, three hours in either session constitutes full-time status for that session and two hours constitutes half-time status. Students who have completed all course work and who only have a thesis to complete must enroll in a minimum of one credit hour to maintain continuous enrollment status. Students on assistantships are encouraged to review FICA regulations and some federal loan deferment regulations with regard to full- versus part-time status.

All students on graduate assistantship must be enrolled in at least six credit hours and may enroll in up to nine hours. Occasionally a student who holds a GA appointment will take only 3 credit hours. The student must seek permission from the Graduate College to under-enroll for the semester (a Graduate College form is used for this purpose and is available on the Graduate College website under Forms).

COURSE PLANNING

The Master's program in Communication requires the completion of 30 credit hours. A full-time Master's student taking 15 credits each academic year should be able to graduate in April of the second year of his/her program. Part-time students (those taking three credits a semester) typically are able to complete their studies in approximately two and a half to three years, if they complete a course during each semester, including a summer term.

The scheduling of courses is always subject to availability of faculty and sufficient enrollments. However, to facilitate the planning of your Permanent Program, the School of Communication offers the following guidelines.

1. Number of courses: We try to offer a minimum of 3-4 graduate classes each fall and spring semester and try to offer 1, 5000- or 6000-level course in summer.
2. Research Foundations: COM 6010 Introduction to Communication Theory and Research is offered every fall and is required of all entering graduate students. COM 6020 Quantitative Communication Research typically is offered in the fall semester. COM 6050 Qualitative Communication Research typically is

offered in spring semester. We do our best to ensure that the research courses are offered each year.

3. Electives: Two communication electives are typically offered every fall semester and every spring semester. One elective may be offered in either summer I or summer II, provided personnel and funding are available
4. Capstones: Approximately half way through their master's program, students are required to select a capstone option and plan their remaining courses accordingly.
5. Cognates: Students admitted to the master's program BEFORE Fall 2024 may enroll in up to 6 credit hours in course(s) outside the School of Communication. Students admitted BEGINNING Fall 2024 may enroll in up to 3 credit hours in course(s) outside the school.

REGISTERING FOR COM 7000/7100/7120/7150

COM 7000 – Master's Thesis (capstone credits)

COM 7100 – Independent Research

COM 7120 – Field Experience/Internship

COM 7150 – Professional Project (capstone credits)

For 7000-level courses, a student is required to complete a form before each registration— **Form XI: Application for Permission to Elect** is for a thesis, for an independent study, for a field experience internship and for professional project credits. The form requests a description of the work to be completed in each election, and it must be signed by (a) the student; (b) the faculty advisor; (c) the Graduate Studies Director; and (d) the School of Communication Director.

Registration for COM 7000, 7100, 7120, and 7150 must be completed in a timely manner, especially for those who hold a graduate assistantship. Students self-register for these courses. It is strongly recommended that students complete the necessary paperwork during their assigned registration period or at the latest by July 1 for fall term, by November 1 for spring term, and by March 1 for summer I/II. If a GA is under-enrolled (less than six credit hours without the appropriate permission) at the time that financial aid awards are posted, the GA's stipend and salary will not be released.

BEFORE Fall 2024

Graduate students in the School of Communication may include a maximum of six credit hours of COM 7100 and 7120 in their Permanent Program of Study.

BEGINNING in Fall 2024

Graduate students in the School of Communication may include a maximum of six credit hours of COM 7100 and three credit hours of COM 7120 in their Permanent Program of Study. Students, in consultation with their permanent advisor, may petition the Director of Graduate Studies for permission to exceed the credit hour limit.

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH (COM 7100)

The Graduate College Policy Statement on Independent Research follows:

Independent Research refers to enrollment in an appropriately designated, variable- credit course for a specific plan of study, authorized and supervised by a designated, consenting faculty member. Independent Research is not a substitute for regular courses but an enrichment opportunity. Normally, it is a project designed to allow students to investigate an area of interest not within the scope of a regular course, to probe more in depth than is possible in a regular course, or to obtain educational experience outside that normally offered by a regular course.

Since individual Independent Research projects are normally reviewed through the usual department and University review processes, it is essential that the academic adequacy of such projects be assured by some other means applied consistently throughout the University. The following policy guidelines are intended to serve that function.

PROPOSALS FOR INDEPENDENT RESEARCH:

Independent Research requires an adequate description of the work to be undertaken, requiring planning in advance of the registration period. Sufficient time, therefore, must be allowed for such planning and for obtaining the necessary faculty and administrative approval. While the Independent Research project is often student-initiated, early interaction with faculty is essential in the development of a mutually acceptable project description. At a minimum, such a description should contain an outline of the study topic, specification of the work to be done and the materials to be read, the credit to be given, the type and frequency of faculty-student contacts, a statement of the evaluation criteria to be used by the faculty member, and deadlines for identified tasks. The student and the faculty member should include a statement regarding the plan for meeting HSIRB requirements, if applicable to the project.

APPROVAL PROCESS:

The faculty member must accept and approve the student and the project, and then submit the agreed upon proposal on the **Form XI: Application for Permission to Elect** form to the Director of the school for approval. If the Director approves, information copies of the form must be submitted to the Dean and Registrar.

FACULTY RESPONSIBILITY:

A student functions independently in a COM 7100 in that it involves no class meetings or formal lectures. The faculty member is the responsible custodian of the project, obliged to provide guidance, assistance, criticism, suggestion, and evaluation, and shall be the instructor of record who is responsible for assigning the grade. It is recommended that faculty members and students discuss their expectations for COM 7100, including but not limited to communication preferences, deadlines for completion of the overall work, how the work will be evaluated, deliverables by the student, and mentoring by the faculty member. **It is highly recommended that mutual expectations are communicated in writing with both student and faculty member signing their approval and retaining copies for their records.** See the Graduate Director for sample guidelines.

REGISTRATION AND GRADE REPORTS IN THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION:

The student self-enrolls after the COM 7100 enrollment has been approved and restrictions have been lifted. A copy of the completed **Form XI: Application for Permission to Elect** form is returned to the student. A COM 7100 is graded on a Credit/No Credit basis. At the end of the semester, the faculty member advising the student will submit the final grade.

PROFESSIONAL FIELD EXPERIENCE (COM 7120)

Designed for graduate students nearing completion of their degree who wish to pursue internships or applied professional experiences. Effective internships or applied experiences relate to the student's professional goals, require the student to function within the standard procedures of the setting and require the student to assume increased professional activities.

Typically, professional field experiences are for three (3) credit hours and generally, one credit hour is equivalent to 45 clock hours and may include assigned readings, attending an

undergraduate course aligned with the 7120 topic/experience, completing assignments of same course, work hours at the field site, and the development of deliverable(s) (e.g. communication campaign, training).

The student and the supervising faculty member should include a statement regarding the plan for meeting 7120 requirements. If functioning in the field with an organizational sponsor, the student must be provided the opportunity for direction, guidance and feedback from both the field supervisor and the faculty sponsor. If HSIRB requirements are applicable to the field experience, the plan should address them.

Permission to elect 7120 can be granted only when the student's faculty supervisor deems that the project is integral to the student's program of study and approves a description of the professional experience (e.g., duties and responsibilities of the student, special projects, etc.) and the names of both the interning organization and the organization supervisor, if applicable. 7120 should not supplant required or expected courses in the graduate program.

BEFORE Fall 2024

If a graduate program has a required internship or field experience, approved by the university curricular review process, a maximum of 6 hours of 7120 may be applied to the graduate degree.

BEGINNING Fall 2024

If a graduate program has a required internship or field experience, approved by the university curricular review process, a maximum of 3 hours of 7120 may be applied to the graduate degree.

APPROVAL PROCESS:

A faculty member must accept and agree to sponsor the student and field experience, and then submit the agreed-upon outline of the field experience and its outcomes on the **FORM XI: Application for Permission to Elect** form to the Director of the School for approval.

FACULTY GUIDELINES FOR COM 7120:

The goal of COM 7120 is to provide students with an applied, professional communication experience. This process should be a student-led endeavor so that the student gains project planning and management skills in addition to those specific to their professional field experience. Generally speaking, the faculty should not have extra duties outside of weekly or bi-monthly meetings, as the student should be initiating the plan of work, setting deadlines, and leading correspondence with the outside organization (if applicable).

Before enrolling in COM 7120

- The student should approach the faculty member with a tentative plan and related professional communication goals in mind. It is the student's responsibility to secure an outside organization (if applicable).
- Student and faculty should discuss learning outcomes (i.e., what skills or knowledge will the student be working to acquire) and tangible outcomes or deliverables generated as a result of the professional field experience
- The faculty member should advise the student on how often they expect to meet with the student (e.g., weekly, twice monthly, etc.) and if there are additional expectations such as readings, assignments, progress reports, in addition to the tangible outcomes or deliverables produced as a result of
- the field experience. It is recommended that the faculty member ask the student to propose deadlines for agreed upon submissions.

- After the faculty member and student come to an agreement, the student should initiate related forms: Form XI Permission to Elect and, for students who secure internships with an outside organization, a WMU Affiliation Agreement (non-clinical). These forms will be provided by the Graduate Director or the School of Communication Director.

During COM 7120 credits

- The student and faculty member should hold routine meetings as was discussed prior to enrolling in the professional field experience
- The student and faculty member should return to the preestablished learning outcomes to assess progress and readjust outcomes if necessary
- The student should provide the faculty member with regular progress reports and discuss the development of their tangible outcomes and deliverables
- If the student is working with an outside organization and or outside supervisor, they should check in regularly to provide status updates

REGISTRATION AND GRADE REPORTS IN THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION:

The student self-enrolls in COM 7120 once approved and restrictions have been lifted. A copy of the completed **FORM XI: Application for Permission to Elect** form is returned to the student. A COM 7120 is graded on a Credit/No Credit basis. At the end of the semester, the faculty member advising the student will submit the final grade.

THESIS CREDIT HOURS (COM 7000)

Prior to registration in COM 7000 thesis credit hours, the student must have secured the service of his/her thesis committee chair and other committee members. A **Thesis Committee Appointment** form (see Graduate College website) with the appropriate signatures and permissions of School of Communication personnel must be filed with the Graduate College where the membership of the committee will be reviewed. Students selecting the thesis option must have Graduate College approval of the thesis committee before the student may register for thesis hours (COM 7000). All thesis committee members must hold graduate faculty status.

Occasionally a student will select a committee member who currently is not a member of the graduate faculty. In this case the School of Communication will seek a temporary graduate faculty appointment for this individual which includes additional paperwork and approvals. Students and advisors are reminded that all of this paperwork takes time to process. Again, be mindful of timing for registration when these additional forms must be filed prior to registration.

The course COM 7000 Master's Thesis is six (6) credit hours and may be registered for in increments of one to six credits. Thesis students in the School of Communication typically register for three credits in one semester and three credits in the following semester. Following a student's first enrollment in COM 7000, the student must have continuous enrollment in COM 7000 (see definition of continuous enrollment as it applies to summer enrollments in this Handbook or the Graduate College Catalog) until all thesis requirements are completed satisfactorily and approved by the appropriate bodies. A student unable to complete the thesis in six credit hours will be required to continue to enroll in one credit hour of COM 7000 per semester until the thesis is completed and meets graduation requirements; however, only six credit hours will count toward meeting program requirements. A student must be enrolled in thesis credit in the semester of his/her graduation.

It is recommended that faculty members and students discuss their expectations for the thesis, including but not limited to communication with one another, deadlines for completion of

overall work, how the work will be evaluated, deliverables by the student, and mentoring by the faculty member. It is highly recommended that mutual expectations are communicated in writing with both student and faculty member signing their approval and retaining copies for records. See the Graduate Director for sample guidelines.

REGISTRATION AND GRADE REPORTS IN THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION:

When approval of the committee is received, a student may register for 1-6 thesis credits using the **Form XI: Application for Permission to Elect**. The student self-enrolls once approved and restrictions have been lifted. A copy of the completed **Form XI: Permission to Elect form** and **Thesis Committee Approval** is returned to the student. A thesis is graded on a Credit/No credit basis. At the end of each enrollment period, the faculty member advising the student will submit a letter grade. A student must complete a new **Form XI: Application for Permission to Elect** each semester of thesis enrollment.

PROFESSIONAL PROJECT CREDIT HOURS (COM 7150)

Prior to registration in COM 7150 professional project credit hours, the student must have secured the service of his/her professional project chair and other committee members. A **Request for Appointment of Capstone Committee form (Form V)** with the appropriate signatures and permissions of School of Communication personnel must be filed with the School in the semester PRIOR to registration in COM 7150.

All professional project committee members must hold graduate faculty status. Occasionally a student will select a committee member who currently is not a member of the graduate faculty. In this case the School of Communication will seek a temporary graduate faculty appointment for this individual, i.e., more paperwork. Students and advisors are reminded that all of this paperwork takes time to process through the bureaucracy. Again, be mindful of timing for registration when these additional forms must be filed prior to registration. Students will complete **FORM XI Application for Permission to Elect** for COM 7150. The course COM 7150 Professional Project is three (3) credit hours. A completed project proposal must be defended and approved before enrollment in COM 7150 is permitted. Students self-enroll in COM 7150 and typically, the student would enroll in COM 7150 during the semester in which she/he plans to defend the completed project. Further, a student must be enrolled during the semester he/ she plans to graduate..

It is recommended that faculty members and students discuss their expectations for the professional project, including but not limited to communication preferences, deadlines for completion of the work, how the work will be evaluated, deliverables by the student, and mentoring by the faculty member. It is highly recommended that mutual expectations are communicated in writing with both student and faculty member signing their approval and retaining copies for records. See the Graduate Director for sample guidelines.

THE CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE: AN OVERVIEW

In partial fulfillment of their graduation requirements, students in the Western Michigan University School of Communication's MA Program must complete a capstone experience. The purpose of the capstone experience is to provide a summative demonstration of student competencies acquired through Master's-level coursework. Thus, the capstone experience should merge theory and practice, extend theoretical insights, and demonstrate research skills and communication knowledge.

FACULTY ADVISOR

For each capstone option, students will be required to choose a faculty advisor by the approximate

completion of 12 credits of their graduate course work. It is recommended that the faculty advisor is the same person as the student's permanent advisor. An advisor should be chosen by the student based on a match between the student and faculty advisor's substantive areas of interest. However, in order for faculty members to provide adequate time and attention to the advisees, they are strongly urged to chair no more than three thesis and/or professional project committees at any given time. Hence, if the student's first choice of advisor is already chairing three thesis and/or professional projects, the student should consult with the Graduate Director for recommendations on selecting another advisor who has expertise in the student's substantive area of interest.

The faculty advisor is charged with:

- Advising the student on coursework appropriate for the student's substantive area of interest
- Advising the student regarding selection of other committee members
- Helping the student choose a capstone option and mentoring the student in the performance of the capstone.
- Monitoring the student's academic and capstone progress
- Initiating and facilitating capstone committee meetings
- Determining the readiness of the capstone committee review
- Evaluating the oral defense of the capstone
- Advising the student regarding relevant university and departmental policies, procedures, and documentation

CAPSTONE COMMITTEE

The student and faculty advisor must choose members of the graduate faculty to serve as members of the student's capstone committee: thesis, professional project, comprehensive exam, A committee is NOT required for the coursework option.

The committee should include a minimum of three members of the graduate faculty (including the advisor). Two of the committee members must be from the School of Communication. Students may also choose additional members from allied disciplines around the University.

Appointment of a committee involves:

- Mutual agreement between the student and the prospective committee members
- Formal appointment of the committee member by the Director of the School (or chair designee)
- Notification of and approval of the appointment by the dean of the Graduate College, where required by current University policy.

The purpose of this capstone committee is to provide the range of expertise necessary to advise the student on the capstone and to evaluate it to ensure it represents quality work in the discipline of communication. The capstone committee is charged with:

- Reviewing and evaluating specific steps in the capstone
- Providing consultation during the course of the capstone
- Reviewing and evaluating the written component
- Evaluating the oral defense of the capstone

BEFORE FALL 2024 - CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE OPTIONS

In the following sections, the specific requirements of each of the capstone experience options are delineated. Students and their faculty advisors should review these options carefully as the requirements and outcomes of each option vary.

THESIS OPTION

The thesis project consists of completion of a research paper in which the student proposes and tests new ideas, replicates an existing study, or advances theoretical understanding of an issue. The thesis must demonstrate scholarly abilities, including solid conceptualization, analysis, and writing. The thesis must clearly define the problem to be investigated, demonstrate mastery of relevant academic literature, and show competence in the relevant methodology and analysis techniques. The form and content of the thesis are to be determined by the student and the advisor in consultation with the thesis committee.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THESIS OPTION

Completion of 24 hours of graduate-level course work as outlined in the student's approved Permanent Program of Study (Form II). Students who wish to incorporate hours of coursework outside the department (i.e. cognates), into their program of study must have the support of their advisor.

Completion of a minimum six credit hours of COM 7000 thesis hours to include:

- Design of thesis proposal
- Preparation of the written thesis proposal
- Oral defense of the proposal
- Completion of the thesis to the specifications of the advisor and the capstone committee and in accordance with the guidelines of the Graduate College
- Oral defense of the thesis
- Submission of the thesis with any revisions to the School and to the Graduate College for approval

Students selecting the thesis option should be aware that most thesis projects require approximately one academic year (e.g. fall and spring semesters and one or more summer terms) from conceptualization to delivery of the final approved copy of the thesis to the Graduate College. Students in consultation with the faculty advisor should review the Graduate College deadlines for submission of the thesis and other required documentation in order to plan thesis enrollment efficiently.

FACULTY THESIS ADVISOR

Responsibility for the direction, supervision, and evaluation of the thesis rests with the student-selected faculty thesis advisor and the thesis committee. The student considering the thesis option is strongly encouraged to select the individual as his/her faculty advisor who is best equipped substantively to serve as the student's thesis advisor. However, in order for faculty members to provide adequate time and attention to the advisees, they are strongly urged to chair no more than three thesis and/or professional project committees at any given time. Hence, if the student's first choice of advisor is already chairing three thesis and/or professional projects, the student should consult with the Graduate Director for recommendations on selecting another advisor who has expertise in the student's substantive area of interest.

- The thesis advisor is charged with:
- Advising the student regarding selection of other committee members
- Monitoring the student's thesis progress
- Initiating and facilitating thesis committee meetings
- Determining the readiness of the thesis for committee review
- Evaluating the oral defense of the thesis

- Advising the student regarding relevant university and departmental thesis policies, procedures, and documentation

THESIS COMMITTEE

The student and faculty advisor must choose members of the graduate faculty to serve as members of the student's thesis committee. The committee should include a minimum of three members of the graduate faculty (including the advisor). Two of the committee members must be from the School of Communication. Students may also choose additional members from allied disciplines around the University.

Appointment of a committee involves:

- Mutual agreement between the student and the prospective committee members
- Formal appointment of the committee members by the Director (or director designee)
- Notification of and approval of the appointment by the Dean of the Graduate College, where required by current University policy

The purpose of this thesis committee is to provide the range of expertise necessary to advise the student on the thesis and to evaluate the thesis to ensure it represents quality work in the discipline of communication. The capstone committee is charged with:

- Reviewing and evaluating specific steps in the thesis
- Providing consultation during the course of the thesis
- Reviewing and evaluating the written component of the thesis
- Evaluating the oral defense of the thesis

REQUIREMENTS FOR ENROLLMENT IN MASTER'S THESIS CREDITS

Students are required to take a minimum of six (6) COM 7000 thesis credits as part of the Permanent Program. Typically, students enroll in three thesis credits per semester.

A student who intends to register for the Master's Thesis (COM 7000) is **required** to file a completed **Form XI: Application for Permission to Elect** before registering for each thesis term to ensure that the student is informed about the regulations pertaining to the preparation and submission of the manuscript and to the requirements for research involving regulated subjects and hazardous materials. This permission must be obtained prior to the thesis proposal defense meeting. Further, the student must also have his/his thesis committee approved by the School of Communication, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Graduate College **Committee Appointment Signature form** (located on Graduate College website). It is strongly recommended that this approval be obtained **prior** to registration in COM 7000 credits.

Following a first enrollment in Master's Thesis credits (COM 7000), the student must have continuous enrollment in that same course until all thesis requirements are completed satisfactorily and approved by the appropriate bodies. Registration deadlines apply. At the completion of three (3) hours of thesis credit, the student must have official approval of the thesis proposal by the committee and must have filed **Form VI Defense of Capstone Proposal** with the Director of Graduate Studies before she/he can enroll in any additional thesis credits. For students not enrolled in summer I or summer II sessions, pre-enrollment in the subsequent fall semester is necessary for access to library resources during summer. A student must be enrolled in at least one credit hour of COM 7000 during the semester he/she intends to graduate.

HUMAN SUBJECTS INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (HSIRB) APPROVAL

Students conducting research that involves human subjects must have prior approval of the research proposal by the appropriate University board, thus assuring compliance with the regulations for the protection of such subjects. There are no exceptions to this requirement.

Registration for courses in which research is conducted that requires such prior approval must not be attempted until the approval is granted by the appropriate University board. The student completing such research for a master's thesis must include written approval or an exemption letter from the appropriate board as an appendix to the thesis. If you have any questions about this policy, contact the Director of Graduate Studies, the Director of the School of Communication, and/or the Office of the Vice President for Research.

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING THE THESIS

Students conducting the thesis should:

1. Determine topical area of interest for thesis.
2. Choose a faculty member as faculty advisor who has expertise in the topical area of interest.
3. Discuss the various thesis requirements as outlined by the Graduate College, including formatting requirements and the deadlines for thesis submission and graduation. It is recommended the student attend a Graduate College formatting workshop to learn this information. The student and his/her faculty advisor should prepare a timeline that outlines the steps/dates that facilitate completion of the thesis by the projected graduation date.
4. Work with faculty advisor to determine membership of the thesis committee. This committee must include a minimum of three members of the graduate faculty (including the advisor), at least two from the School of Communication. The student is responsible for securing the commitment of all thesis committee members. The student should complete **Committee Appointment Signature** form (located on Graduate College website) and submit it to the Graduate Director and Director of the School for approval.
5. Work with faculty advisor to design a project and complete a thesis proposal for review by all committee members. A research proposal will consist of the following fully developed elements of a thesis: introduction, review of literature, rationale and justification of the study, and methodology. The student will give thesis committee members copies of the completed proposal to review for the oral defense of the proposal. Committee members must have a minimum of two (2) weeks to review the proposal.
6. Schedule an oral defense of the proposal at the initiation of the faculty advisor. This meeting will be facilitated by the advisor, who will determine the format of the meeting. This meeting may be open to all interested parties.
7. Complete the oral defense of the proposal. All members of the committee will respond to the proposal at the oral defense. The committee must vote on the acceptability of the thesis proposal. The committee shall vote by simple majority to either approve or disapprove of the proposal. Committee members may vote to abstain.
8. The oral defense of the proposal will result in one of the following outcomes:
 - a. Accept the proposal
 - b. Accept the proposal with revisions
 - c. Reject the proposal

The student should submit **Proposal Approval Signature form** (located on Graduate College website) to the Graduate College and **Form VI: Defense of**

Capstone Proposal to the Graduate Director.

9. Submit a copy of the approved thesis proposal to the Director of Graduate Studies.
10. When a proposal is acceptable to the committee members or has been revised concurrent to committee specifications, the student may complete the thesis project under the guidance of the faculty advisor. A proposal that is rejected must be rewritten and the student must orally defend the new proposal following the steps outlined above. Note: All necessary HSIRB approvals must be obtained before initiation of the project.
11. Complete the thesis.
12. Submit the completed thesis to the thesis committee. The student will give thesis committee members copies of the completed thesis to review for the oral defense. Committee members must have a minimum of two (2) weeks to review the thesis.
13. Schedule the oral defense of the completed thesis at the initiation and with the facilitation of the faculty advisor. The advisor will determine the format of the meeting, announce the meeting as open in advance of the meeting time/ date, and will facilitate the meeting. This meeting must be open to all interested faculty and students or others invited by the student or committee members. The committee members and the advisor will conduct the oral defense. All members of the thesis committee will evaluate and respond to the thesis during the defense of the completed thesis.
14. Complete the oral defense of the thesis. Following the oral defense of the final thesis, the committee must determine the acceptability of the thesis. The committee will consider both the student's written and oral performances in making its decision. The committee's deliberations and vote are to be held in private. The committee shall vote by simple majority to either approve or disapprove of the thesis. Committee members may vote to abstain.
15. The oral defense of the thesis will result in one of the following outcomes:
 - a. Accept the completed thesis
 - b. Accept the thesis with revisions
 - c. Reject the thesis
16. A thesis that is rejected must be rewritten and the student must orally defend the revised thesis.
17. When a completed thesis is acceptable to the committee members or has been revised in accordance with committee specifications, the student must submit **Form VIII: Results of Capstone Experience** to the Graduate Director. Students must also submit the **Final Dissertation/project/thesis Approval Signature** Form (located on Graduate College website) and final version of thesis to Graduate College in accordance with the rules established by The Graduate College for submission of theses.

THESIS ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The following items will be evaluated in a thesis by the committee:

- Introduction: Introduction of the research topic, Justification of the research topic, Timeliness of the research topic.
- Literature Review/Theory: Organization of the literature review, Clarity and logical coherence of theoretical arguments, Critical synthesis/analysis, Inclusion of important and relevant citations.
- Methodology: Appropriateness of methods to the study of research questions, Adequacy of the application of methods, Justification of the methods, Articulation of the methods and procedures.

- Data analysis/Critical analysis: Clarity of data presentation, Effective use of graphs, tables or textual examples, Organization of the data, Competence of analysis
- Discussion/Conclusion: Logical link between conclusions and analysis, Significance of research findings and conclusions as argued, Creativity and originality of conclusions.
- Quality of Writing: Adherence to the writing conventions of the discipline, Logical structure and coherence, Writing skills.
- Quality of Oral Defense: Clarity in oral presentation, Coherence of orally presented arguments, Quality of presentation style.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION OPTION

The comprehensive examination option requires the student to demonstrate his/her knowledge of a substantive area within communication and to demonstrate a capacity to integrate theory, research, and practice in response to comprehensive questions. The questions will cover specific substantive areas as determined by the student and the faculty advisor in consultation with the student's Examining Committee.

REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION OPTION

The comprehensive examination option requires the following:

- Completion of 30 hours of coursework as outlined in the student's approved Permanent Program of Study (Form II). Students who wish to incorporate hours of coursework outside the department (i.e. cognates), into their program of study must have the support of their advisor.
- Completion of six (6) hours of written comprehensive examinations.
- Completion of a one (1) hour oral defense of the written examination.

FACULTY COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION ADVISOR

The Permanent Advisor shall serve as the chair of the Examining Committee. The Permanent Advisor is responsible for the following:

- Working with the student to establish the Examining Committee
- Overseeing the selection and preparation of the examination questions
- Providing guidance on the student's overall preparation for the examination as well as in the preparation in the area of study and/or methods the advisor represents
- Overseeing the administration of the examination
- Coordinating the review and evaluation of student responses
- Coordinating and overseeing the oral defense of the exam
- If needed, coordinating and overseeing the rewrite of exam questions

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

Each student selecting the Comprehensive Examination option must have a three-member Examining Committee. In consultation with the faculty advisor, the student shall select an additional two members of the graduate faculty in the School of Communication to serve on his/her Examining Committee. The faculty should represent the areas of study and/or methods the student has emphasized in his/her Program of Study. The advisor and student should submit **Form V: Request for Appointment of Capstone Committee.**

The Examining Committee will be responsible for the following:

- Selecting and preparing examination questions for the student
- Providing guidance on the student's preparation for the examination in the area of

study and / or methods the faculty represents

- Reviewing the student's exam responses and determining the outcome of the exam
- Providing feedback on the exam to the advisor
- Participating in the conduct of the oral defense of the exam
- Reviewing rewrites of exam questions where needed

The Director of Graduate Studies will be responsible for the following:

- Communicating and consulting with the graduate faculty in preparation of the exam questions reflecting the areas of study within the master's curriculum
- Maintaining a pool of potential comprehensive examination questions
- Determining the schedule for the administration of comprehensive examinations
- Providing guidance to students and faculty as needed on procedures and substance of exam items.

ELIGIBILITY FOR COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Students are eligible to take exams during their final semester of enrollment. During fall and spring semesters, students will complete the written comprehensive exams during the scheduled times between the tenth to twelfth week of the semester. During summer I and summer II, the student must complete the written comprehensive examinations between the fourth and sixth weeks of the term. Students must request permission to take examinations by completing **Form VII: Eligibility for Comprehensive Examinations**.

Students' specific substantive, theoretical, and research expertise developed as a master's student will be reflected in the examination. The areas of examination will consist of a theoretical component (2 hours), a methodological component (2 hours), and a content specialty area (2 hours). The Examining Committee members may select questions from a School of Communication question bank. These questions may be modified at the discretion of the committee. The committee also may generate exam questions independently.

Students will be notified of the exact schedule for the comprehensive exams and the exam procedures a minimum of one month prior to the exam dates.

GUIDELINES FOR COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS

Students choosing the comprehensive examination option should:

1. Diligently prepare for the examinations and be familiar with the comprehensive guidelines circulated by the Graduate Director at the beginning of the term in which the exam will be taken. Exemplar questions from prior exams will be available for review by the student.
2. Complete each examination at the scheduled time during the scheduled week. The Director of Graduate Studies is responsible for coordinating the distribution of exam responses for committee review and for the securing of exam responses.
3. Receive feedback on written exams. Members of the Examining Committee will read all the exam questions and give feedback on the student's performance to the faculty advisor within two weeks of receipt of the exam responses. The faculty advisor will then meet individually with the student. A general evaluation of the student's written answers will be shared with the student.
4. The oral defense must be scheduled no sooner than one week after receipt of the exam feedback from the Examining Committee and no later than three weeks. During the oral defense, students must be prepared to answer questions about their

written answers; to elaborate on aspects of their written answers that, upon reflection, require further development; to clear up any logical inconsistencies or unclear statements, etc.

5. The Examining Committee will determine, upon completion of the oral defense, whether the student has successfully passed all her/his exams. The committee will consider both the student's written and oral performances in making its decision. The committee's deliberations and vote are to be held in private. The committee shall vote by simple majority. Committee members may vote to abstain. The committee may determine one of the following outcomes:
 - the student's written and oral performances are acceptable;
 - the student needs to revise and resubmit one or more of the essays;
 - the student needs to retake the exams with new questions.
6. Revise specific exam questions, as needed. Students who need to revise or retake specific exam questions must consult with their advisor regarding their first efforts and regarding the scheduling of the rewrites. The Examining Committee shall decide the appropriate mechanisms for evaluation of the rewrites.
7. Retake written and oral comprehensive examinations with new questions, in cases of failure to pass. In such cases students must wait until the following semester to retake their exams and must follow the same procedures for completing this capstone experience.
8. With a passing decision, the student and his/her faculty advisor will file **Form VIII: Results of Capstone Experience** with the Graduate Director and the student must email the form to the WMU registrar to graduate.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The following items will be used to evaluate the comprehensive exam answers by the committee.

- Organization and Argument: Clarity of the central argument or thesis, Organization of the content, Articulation of the arguments, Critical synthesis of material.
- Content & Key Terms: Key concepts and principles identified and defined, Core concepts and principles applied, Core concepts linked to scholars/theories.
- Sources/ Specific Support: Relevance of citations, Adequacy of references used, Correct formatting of citations
- Synthesis: Synthesis of the central arguments, Integration of the central themes and issues, Quality of the critique of scholarly content, Ability to synthesize the core arguments.
- Quality of Writing: Adherence to the writing conventions of the discipline, Logical structure and coherence, Writing skills.
- Quality of Oral Defense: Clarity in oral presentation, Coherence of orally presented arguments, Quality of presentation style.

TIMELINE FOR COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

Students will receive a detailed list of the schedule / timeline from the graduate director following their submission and approval of **Form VII: Eligibility to Hold Comprehensive Examinations**

PROFESSIONAL PROJECT OPTION

The professional project option is intended for graduate students who desire to extend their academic education by engaging in the development, enactment, and assessment of an applied communication experience. The uniqueness of each student's professional project enhances theoretical and applied learning and provides an opportunity to evaluate the scope of conceptual understanding and skills mastery acquired in the M.A. program. The professional project may involve workshops, case studies, training, website development, communication assessments and completion of other projects within the context of the student's chosen area of study.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROFESSIONAL PROJECT OPTION

The professional field experience requires the following:

1. Completion of 27 hours of coursework as outlined in the student's approved Permanent Program of Study. Students who wish to incorporate hours of coursework outside the department (i.e. cognates), into their program of study must have the support of their advisor. Completion of 3 credit hours of **COM 7150 Professional Project** credit to include:
2. Preparation of a written professional project proposal
3. Oral defense of the proposal
4. Completion of the project to the specifications of the advisor and the capstone committee
5. Oral defense of the professional project
6. Submission of the professional project with any revisions to the School of Communication

FACULTY PROFESSIONAL PROJECT ADVISOR

Responsibility for the direction, supervision, and evaluation of the professional project rests with the Permanent advisor. The student considering the professional project option is strongly encouraged to select the individual as his/her faculty advisor who is best equipped substantively to serve as the student's advisor. However, in order for faculty members to provide adequate time and attention to the advisees, they are strongly urged to chair no more than three thesis and/or professional project committees at any given time. Hence, if the student's first choice of advisor is already chairing three thesis and/or professional projects, the student should consult with the graduate director for recommendations on selecting another advisor who has expertise in the student's substantive area of interest.

The professional project advisor is charged with:

- Advising the student regarding relevant university and departmental policies, policies, procedures, and documentation
- Assisting the student with the development of a proposal for a professional project
- Initiating and facilitating the student's oral defense of the professional project proposal before the capstone committee
- Monitoring the student's progress and determining readiness for review.
- Mentoring the student in his/her performance of the project.
- Evaluating the completed professional project and the oral defense
- Initiating and facilitating committee meetings

PROFESSIONAL PROJECT COMMITTEE

The student and faculty advisor must choose members of the graduate faculty to serve as members of the student's professional project committee. The committee should include a minimum of three members of the graduate faculty (including the advisor). Two of the committee members must be from the School of Communication. Students may also choose additional members from allied disciplines around the University.

Appointment of a committee involves:

- Mutual agreement between the student and the prospective committee members
- Formal appointment of the committee members by the Director (or director designee)

The purpose of this committee is to provide the range of expertise necessary to advise the student on the professional project and to evaluate the project to ensure it represents quality work in the discipline of communication. The capstone committee is charged with:

- Reviewing and evaluating specific components of the project proposal and project
- Providing consultation during the course of the project
- Reviewing and evaluating the written project
- Evaluating the oral defense of the professional project

ENROLLMENT IN COM 7150 PROFESSIONAL PROJECT CREDITS

The professional field experience consists of 3 credit hours (COM 7150). Students typically would enroll in these credits during their final semester. Students selecting this option should be aware that the project proposal must be approved by their capstone committee in the semester PRIOR to enrollment in COM 7150.

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING THE PROFESSIONAL PROJECT

Students conducting the professional project should:

1. Determine topical area of interest for the professional project.
2. Choose a faculty advisor who has expertise in the topical area of interest.
3. Discuss the various project requirements as outlined in the School of Communication Graduate Handbook. The student and his/her faculty advisor should prepare a timeline that outlines the steps/dates that facilitate completion of the project by the projected graduation date.
4. Work with faculty advisor to determine membership of the capstone committee. This committee must include a minimum of three members of the graduate faculty (including the advisor), at least two from the School of Communication. The student is responsible for securing the commitment of all committee members. The student should complete **Form V: Request for Appointment of Capstone Committee** and submit it to the Graduate Director and Director of the School for approval.
5. Work with the faculty advisor to design a project and complete a proposal for review by all committee members. The project proposal will consist of the following sections: introduction, conceptual/theoretical foundations of the project, goals of the project and expected outcomes for proposed beneficiaries, and project plan & procedures. The student will give committee members copies of the completed proposal to review for the oral defense of the proposal. Committee members must have a minimum of two (2) weeks to review the proposal. This proposal must be completed and approved in the semester prior to enrollment in COM 7150.
6. Schedule an oral defense of the proposal at the initiation and with the facilitation of the faculty advisor. This meeting will be facilitated by the advisor, who will determine the format of the meeting and invite others in advance of the meeting time and date. **This meeting must be open to all interested parties.**
7. Complete the oral defense of the proposal. All members of the committee

will respond to the proposal during the course of the oral defense of the proposal. Following the oral defense of the proposal, the committee must vote on the acceptability of the project. The committee shall vote by simple majority to either approve or disapprove of the proposal. Committee members may vote to abstain.

8. The oral defense of the proposal will result in one of the following outcomes:
 - Accept the proposal
 - Accept the proposal with revisions
 - Reject the proposal
9. Submit a copy of the approved professional project proposal to the Director of Graduate Studies.
10. The advisor and student should submit **Form VI: Defense of Capstone Proposal** to the Graduate Director. The student may then self-enroll in COM 7150.
11. When a proposal is acceptable to the committee members or has been revised concurrent to committee specifications, the student may complete the project under the guidance of the faculty advisor. A proposal that is rejected must be rewritten and the student must orally defend the new proposal following the steps outlined above. Note: The student and the faculty advisor must be aware of and comply with all necessary HSIRB approvals before initiation of the project.
12. Complete the professional project.
13. Submit the completed project to the committee. The student will give committee members copies of the completed project to review for the oral defense. Committee members must have a minimum of two (2) weeks to review the professional project.
14. Schedule the oral defense of the completed project at the initiation and with the facilitation of the faculty advisor. The advisor will determine the format of the meeting, will facilitate the meeting and invite others in advance of the meeting time and date. **This meeting must be open to all interested parties.** The committee members and the advisor will conduct the oral defense. All members of the committee will evaluate and respond to the project during the defense.
15. Complete the oral defense. Following the oral defense of the final project, the committee must determine the acceptability of the project. The committee will consider both the student's written and oral performances in making its decision. The committee's deliberations and vote are to be held in private. The committee shall vote by simple majority to either approve or disapprove of the project. Committee members may vote to abstain.
16. The oral defense will result in one of the following outcomes:
 - Accept the completed project
 - Accept the project with revisions
 - Reject the project
17. A professional project that is rejected must be rewritten and the student must orally defend the revised project.
18. When a completed professional project is acceptable to the committee members or has been revised in accordance with committee specifications, the student must submit **Form VIII: Results of Capstone Experience** indicating the final outcome of the defense to the Graduate Director and Director of the School of Communication. A final version of the professional project must be submitted to the School of Communication.

The following items will be used to evaluate the Professional Project by the committee.

- Project Proposal: The conceptual/theoretical foundations of the project are justified, Project plan and procedures are linked to the goals of the project, Beneficiaries and the expected benefits for them are defined.
- Project Implementation: Management of schedules, Administration of the project in line with the proposed objectives, Management of support teams, resources, and/or partners, Cumulative average for project Implementation.
- Project Portfolio: Quality of the project in terms of benefits to beneficiaries, Integration of application and theory, Quality of plan for assessing benefits, including instrument, Rationale for assessment plan developed.
- Quality of Writing: Adherence to the writing conventions of the discipline, Logical structure and coherence, Writing skills.
- Quality of Oral Defense: Clarity in oral presentation, Coherence of orally presented arguments, Quality of presentation style.

BEGINNING IN FALL 2024 CAPSTONE OPTIONS

Beginning in Fall 2024, capstone options are: Thesis, Professional Project, and Coursework. Comprehensive exams are NO longer an option.

See information in previous section about thesis and professional project options and procedures.

REQUIREMENTS FOR COURSEWORK OPTION

The coursework option is for the student who desires to take as many standard communication courses as possible to build their mastery of the discipline and do so within a structured, faculty-led environment with student peers. It requires the student to complete six additional credit hours as electives.

FACULTY ADVISOR

The coursework option only requires a student to have a permanent advisor. The advisor is responsible for providing guidance on the student's choices to complete 30 hours of coursework as outlined in the student's approved Permanent Program of Study (Form II). Students who wish to incorporate hours of coursework outside the department (i.e. cognates) into their program of study must have their advisor's approval.

COURSEWORK COMMITTEE

There is no committee required for the coursework option.

COURSEWORK GUIDELINES, ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND TIMELINE

The student is expected to meet with their permanent advisor to seek guidance on courses to complete their program of study. Assessment will be evaluated by the student's academic performance in courses. They must be in good standing, earning a degree program grade point average of at least 3.0 to satisfy University requirements.

APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION AND THE GRADUATION AUDIT

A graduation audit must be performed by a graduation auditor at the Office of the Registrar for each student prior to graduation to determine the student's eligibility for graduation. The audit, initiated by a student's application for graduation, determines whether University, degree, and

program requirements have been met satisfactorily. Meeting the deadline for applications is critical. **Late applications will be charged a \$200 fee.**

Students desiring to graduate must apply by the following deadlines:

- April graduation apply by **October 1**
- June, August, December graduation apply **February 1**

Applying consists of two steps:

- 1) Obtain, complete, and submit an audit application and pay fee online through the GoWMU portal.
- 2) Email a completed, signed Form II: Program of Study by the deadline to the Office of the Registrar at registrar-info.wmich.edu.

Students who do not graduate at the time for which they apply may apply again as often as necessary; there is no fee for reapplication. Students must contact the Office of the Registrar to request a new graduation date. It will not automatically be moved to another graduation date upon failure to graduate in the time originally requested.

RESEARCH AND GRADUATE EDUCATION

A philosophy of engaged scholarship centralizes the role of research and collaboration in those endeavors in the Master of Arts in Communication at Western Michigan University. The educational benefits of research partnerships are many. Students who experience research partnerships as an integral part of their education are likely to develop an appreciation for the role of research in their professional endeavors. Those who aspire to become future faculty will see first-hand how professors integrate research with teaching and service responsibilities. Others will develop awareness of the importance of research and the potential contributions of a body of knowledge to their professional careers outside of academe.

RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP MODEL

A research partnership is comprised of one or more faculty members working with one or more students on a research project. Research partnerships may be small, such as 1 faculty member working with 1 student, or they may be large, such as three (3) faculty members working with six (6) students on an interdisciplinary project.

FORMS OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION – INFORMALLY ARRANGED WITH FACULTY

Graduate students may participate in research partnerships on a voluntary basis. This is especially recommended for students who plan to complete a thesis or pursue doctoral work.

Some students may choose to participate in two research partnerships simultaneously to gain varied research experiences. Even when graduate students are formally assigned to one partnership, they may voluntarily participate in a second partnership.

When participating in voluntary research partnerships, students may prearrange independent study credit commensurate with their research contributions.

ASSIGNED PARTICIPATION – FORMALLY ARRANGED BY DEPARTMENT

Thurgood Marshall Assistants may be assigned to devote ten (10) hours/week to a research

partnership.

PROCEDURES FOR ARRANGING VOLUNTARY RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

Faculty biographies identifying general areas of research interest, can be found on the School website <https://wmich.edu/communication/directory>

Students are encouraged to initiate contact faculty members directly to discuss research partnerships (e.g. ask about research goals and ideas and discuss expectations and abilities).

STUDENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

Students engaged as research partners may make a variety of contributions contingent on their abilities and interests, as negotiated with their faculty partners. Ideally, they would have the opportunity to experience all aspects of the research process from conceptualization to publication. This would be possible with less complex studies or in long-term partnerships. Student contributions may increase over time as they gain experience and develop essential competencies. Alternatively, students may contribute to phases of research projects. They may be involved in the following:

- conducting library or database searches in a topical area;
- reviewing and abstracting research articles;
- conceptualizing research problems based on a literature review;
- researching available sources of funding for research;
- writing and submitting grant proposals to funding agencies;
- developing study designs, procedures, and instruments;
- gathering data (e.g., conducting interviews, observations, surveys, focus groups);
- recording data (e.g., coding, transcribing, or entering data into a computer program);
- analyzing and interpreting data;
- writing sections of research reports;
- preparing reference lists in APA or another style;
- identifying outlets for presenting and publishing research;
- developing research presentation materials;
- presenting or co-presenting study results in professional contexts;
- preparing manuscripts to submit to journals; and
- responding to editorial recommendations for journal submissions.

FACULTY CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

In ideal research partnerships, faculty members are more than *supervisors*; they are *mentors*. At a minimum, research mentors would:

- provide guidance and support during all phases of the research process;
- identify students' current competencies and provide instruction and hands-on opportunities to build further competencies;
- define and negotiate roles, responsibilities, and timelines at the outset of a project to ensure clear expectations, and revisit and renegotiate expectations as needed during the project;
- meet regularly, perhaps weekly, with students, ensuring ongoing commitment and accountability; and
- provide timely feedback to students, addressing problems as they arise and seeking outside support as needed.

ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

Ethical issues arise at every stage of the research process. Students and faculty should familiarize themselves with university standards, NCA standards, APA standards, and other accepted disciplinary standards for ethical research conduct, and adhere to these standards at all times. The NCA encourages communication researchers to consult the APA guidelines for ethical conduct of social scientific research at www.apa.org/ethics/code.html.

The School of Communication has adopted two ethics policy statements that address the research partnership (see this Handbook, under School of Communication/University policies).

HUMAN SUBJECTS INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (HSIRB)

All research involving protected or regulated subjects and materials must be in compliance (approved review or approved exemptions as applicable) with federal, state, and Western Michigan University requirements for the protection of human/animal subjects. The student researcher who prepares the paper is responsible for obtaining the appropriate forms from the official WMU review board (i.e., HSIRB, forms available online), and must receive approval or an approved exemption for the conduct of the research from the board **prior to initiation of the study**. Written approval from the board must be included as an appendix to the thesis. The Graduate College will not approve any thesis that does not comply with these requirements.

In the School of Communication, a research project with human subjects may be conducted as a class assignment or sometimes students wish to conduct an independent study (COM 7100) that requires the use of human subjects. For the protection of the participants, the researcher, the School, and the University, these projects must also receive HSIRB review and approval.

RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

The WMU community has approved a Research Misconduct Policy. This policy may be found later in this handbook and online at <https://http://wmich.edu/policies/research-misconduct>.

SUPPORT FOR GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH AND TRAVEL

GRADUATE COLLEGE AND GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

The Graduate College awards grants to encourage and support research by graduate students and to assist them in presenting their findings to professional groups. Students must be enrolled at the time the research or travel takes place. This grant may be awarded in conjunction with other appointments. Application forms and guidelines are located on the [Graduate College website](#). The Graduate Student Association (GSA) also provides travel funding on a competitive basis.

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

The School of Communication, as funds are available, will support graduate student travel to meetings or events sponsored by professional organizations for the purpose of reporting the results of research, exhibiting or performing creative works, or otherwise disseminating results of their scholarly activity. Preference will be given to papers/panel presentations that are competitively selected or to juried media.

To be eligible for an award, an applicant must be regularly admitted to the M.A. degree program in Communication, and must be in good academic standing. Priority will be given to applicants who are the sole or principal investigator or the invited presenter.

The school will typically be able to fund only per diem. The number of awards will depend

on the number of applications received and the budget available. Applicants should contact the Director of the School and the School Administrative Assistant with their request. Applicants should be aware that we will attempt to fund as many applications as meet the criteria but not all applications may be selected for funding and that not all applicants may receive the amount of funding requested.

FUNDING GRADUATE EDUCATION

Several forms of financial assistance are available to support your graduate education. Western Michigan University provides fellowships and assistantships or appointments for graduate students at the Master's level. These forms of financial assistance are competitive. Assistant and appointee are terms used interchangeably. Applications are due when applications for admission are due and appointments are usually made by the end of March for students planning to enroll in the fall semester. Appointments are renewable unless otherwise noted.

GRADUATE APPOINTMENTS

The School of Communication mainly offers teaching assistantships for two semesters of full time appointment. Teaching assistantships may be for teaching specific courses and/or assisting faculty in large lecture courses. To a lesser degree, research assistantships may be available for students to assist faculty with research. A full-time assistantship requires 20 hours of work per week. Students awarded full-time assistantships are required to enroll in at least six credit hours each semester. Applications for these assistantships can be found online at the school's website. Applications are due on February 1 for award the following academic year.

Graduate assistantships are available in other departments and areas of the university as well (e.g., student affairs). Inquiries about these assistantships should be explored online through WMU's Career and Student Employment Services and/or by contacting potential sponsoring units.

THURGOOD MARSHALL FELLOWSHIPS

Thurgood Marshall Fellowship applicants must possess U.S. citizenship and must have submitted an application for admission to a master's level program at WMU. The Fellowship is awarded for one academic year to students who have been admitted to a master's program. Thurgood Marshall Fellows shall not have studied previously for a master's degree; at the time of accepting a Thurgood Marshall Fellowship, a student may not have accumulated more than nine credit hours toward a graduate degree at WMU. Master's level Thurgood Marshall Fellows shall be appointees of the Graduate College, and in this capacity, they shall work for 10 hours weekly as a graduate assistant in teaching, research, or service. The award requires full-time enrollment and pays two-thirds tuition (up to nine credit-hours in Fall and Spring semesters, and up to 3 credit hours in each of two summer sessions). A stipend is also paid for each semester/session of full-time enrollment. One-year renewal of this award is possible but not guaranteed. **Inquiries should be directed to the Graduate College.**

OTHER

Students who have been admitted to a graduate program are considered "independent" students and may file a *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)*. The FAFSA is available from the WMU Financial Aid Office, from other higher education institutions, or it can be filed electronically at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa> For further information, contact the WMU Financial Aid Office at 269-387-6000.

Specific policies governing graduate student appointments and benefits accruing with these appointments can be found online at the Graduate College website.

GRADUATE APPOINTEE BENEFITS

Tuition Scholarship: Graduate assistants are granted a full or partial tuition scholarship depending on their degree level and type of appointment. A full time graduate assistant in the School of Communication typically receives a tuition scholarship that covers 9 tuition credit hours per semester, or 18 total per academic year. Assistants who do not use the full amount of their allotted 9 credits of tuition remission during either of the Fall/Spring semesters may defer the unused credits to the summer I and/or II session subsequent to the Fall/Spring semester in which the credits were granted. **They must enroll in hours and submit the delayed tuition form to the Graduate College by required deadlines.**

A student who is granted a tuition scholarship and subsequently withdraws from a class after the refund period and/or cancels the appointment will be required to repay the portion of tuition that was granted as a benefit of the appointment. The tuition scholarship amount is credited to the student's account before the beginning of the term. Any overpayment or underpayment due to a change in your enrollment will be corrected after the end of the drop/add period through an adjustment to your student account.

Tuition Payment Deferment: GAs may defer payment of tuition by signing up for the installment payment plan available through Accounts Receivable. The usual fee for this service will be required at the time of enrollment and refunded to students upon verification of the graduate appointment in about the sixth week of the term.

Health Insurance: The university does not offer student health insurance however enrollment materials and information regarding the Affordable Care Act are available at the Sindecuse Health Center website <https://wmich.edu/healthcenter/about/insurance>. Per TAU contract, Teaching appointees receive a health care subsidy to defray health care costs.

Parking: GAs are exempt from paying the motor vehicle registration fee, but must register their vehicles with Parking Services.

Campus Bookstore: GAs receive a 10% discount on books for their classes and supplies (excludes class rings and sale items) in the term(s) they hold an appointment. To receive this discount, appointees must identify their status as GAs at the service desk before purchases are made.

Library: GAs receive certain privileges at the University Libraries when they identify their status before checkout. The borrowing period is one semester. GAs may borrow up to 50 items, and are exempt from ordinary overdue fines. The exemption does not include fines for overdue recalled items and replacement charges for lost items. Details are available at the library circulation desk.

University Housing: GAs are accorded priority in securing University housing in residence halls or family housing apartments (if deadlines are observed and vacancies permit).

GRADUATE APPOINTEE (GA) RESPONSIBILITIES

Graduate appointees / assistants in the School of Communication are assigned teaching activities. We *discourage* our GAs from taking on full-time employment outside of their graduate appointments, but we also recognize that the teaching stipend may not be able to cover all costs. GAs encountering financial difficulties should reach out to the School of Communication Director and Graduate Director to learn about WMU resources that could assist them (e.g., Essential Need Project).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MASS LECTURE GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

All full-time GAs have a twenty hour a week obligation to the School of Communication. Those hours are for assisting SoC faculty in their course(s), teaching a course, or a combination of those responsibilities. GAs who are assisting a professor who instructs a mass lecture course have the following duties:

1. Teaching assistants (TAs) and respective mass lecture faculty should meet informally to discuss the items below *before* the first week of school. *TAs should initiate the meeting.*
2. The TA may lecture in the absence of the instructor, when the instructor must be away due to travel to professional meetings or illness. The TA may also lecture in the presence of the instructor, for purposes of providing practice and feedback. The TA will not be asked to lecture on any topic without adequate preparation
3. The TA will hold office hours to meet with students. The number of office hours per week and modality required should be determined in consultation with the professor assigned to the course. The TA should seek out the professor whenever there is any course material that is unclear.
4. During office hours, consult with students who have questions, go over examinations with students, and help students assess their standing in the course. This will require that the TA have an up-to-date copy of the grade records for the course.
5. The TA is expected to have and regularly use a WMU email account and their WMU email address will be made available to students. **ALL email communication should be on WMU email accounts.** TAs should not reveal home phone numbers, addresses, or other personal information to students
6. The TA may be asked to contribute questions for examinations. This assignment should be made at the beginning of the semester or session. The TA may be expected to prepare exam keys and to keep files of answer sheets, exams, and exam answer keys.
7. The TA may be asked to grade papers, quizzes and assignments.
8. The TA may be asked to conduct regularly scheduled study sessions with students preceding examinations. These study sessions will be scheduled at the beginning of the semester, if the professor chooses to have them.
9. The TA will be present for all meetings of the class, including examinations, as per the instructor's direction.
10. The TA does not have the authority to approve a student's excuse for taking an examination late or turning in any assignment late. Any such request received from a student must be referred to the professor in charge of the course.
11. Assistance outside of regularly assigned duties will be limited to 6 hours a semester. TAs may provide help such as assisting in examination administration/supervision in other mass lecture classes provided that there is no time conflict.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COM 1000 GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Full-time GAs assigned to the COM 1000 model have a twenty-hour a week obligation to the School of Communication. This course consists of asynchronous online lectures and **multiple**, in-person lab sessions each week. GAs are responsible for their assigned lab sections, a general contribution to the overall course, and the specific responsibilities listed below.

1. The TA (graduate student assigned teaching duties, or teaching assistant)

will hold office hours to meet with students. At least 3 office hours per week are required, determined in consultation with the professor/course director assigned to the course. The TA should seek out the professor/course director whenever there is any course material that is unclear.

2. During office hours, consult with students who have questions, review examinations with them, and help them assess their standing in the course. This will require that the TA have an up-to-date copy of the grade records for the course and a working knowledge of all content areas/assignments, specific requirements, and due dates. All office hours must be conducted on WMU's campus or using a WMU-sanctioned virtual office space (Webex/Zoom). The TA will never meet with students off campus. Office hours should be held during regular business hours (**Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. EST**), unless otherwise approved to make a change.
3. The TA will be expected to use their WMU email account exclusively for all class business as their WMU email address will be available to students. **ALL email communication should be through WMU email accounts.** TAs should never reveal personal phone numbers/email addresses, home addresses, or social media accounts to students.
4. The TA may be asked to contribute questions for examinations and maybe expected to assist with all administrative tasks related to exams/quizzes.
5. The TA must follow the syllabus and policies as established by the professor/course director. For example, policies regarding attendance, late work, and makeup examinations as established by the professor/course director shall be followed. Any request for exceptions received from a student must be referred to the professor/course director. TAs are not able to make unilateral decisions regarding attendance, extensions, or other policies outlined in the syllabus.
6. Assistance outside of regularly assigned duties will be limited to 6 hours semester. TAs may provide help such as assisting in examination administration/supervision in other mass lecture classes provided that there is no time conflict.
7. TAs are expected to attend weekly meetings to discuss course objectives, created teaching plans, and to review issues related to the course.

DUTIES FOR MASS LECTURE SESSION OF COM1000

1. TAs should not change any links, dates, or files on Elearning without the consent of the professor/course director. However, a TA may be asked to manage the Elearning course page in the absence of the professor/course director due to travel to professional meetings or illness.
2. The TA may be asked to lecture (in their lab section) in the presence of the instructor, for purposes of providing practice and feedback. The TA will not be asked to lecture on topics for which they do not have adequate preparation.
3. If the large lectures/course events are conducted in-person, the TA will be present for all meetings of the lecture sections. If the lectures/course events are online, the TA must watch every lecture/prepare for the event ahead of its due date in the course and be familiar with the content/expectations ahead of their lab meeting.
4. TAs must be available to assist the professor during online/in-person

lectures when needed.

DUTIES FOR LAB SESSIONS OF COM1000

1. TAs are responsible for all the instructional activities in their lab sessions (lectures, activities, etc.).
2. The TA will conduct in-class study/review sessions with students before examinations.
3. The TA will introduce and prepare students for each of the major assignments in the course.
4. TAs are responsible for grading papers, quizzes, and assignments. TAs are responsible for keeping up-to-date, accurate records of grades for each student. Grading must be completed and entered within 14 days of the assignment's due date.
5. At the end of each semester (by the day of the final exam in the course) the TA is responsible for checking the accuracy of their students' grades, making sure the grades are all complete, and communicating any discrepancies to the professor/course director.
6. TAs must administer course and teaching evaluations in each lab section each semester. The procedures for administering these evaluations should follow WMU and SoC policy.

GA RESPONSIBILITIES AS INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD

During the second year of an assistantship, graduate assistants may be assigned as instructor of record to COM 1700 Interpersonal Communication, COM 1040 Public Speaking or COM 1000 Communication and Community Engagement. Two sections of a course define a full-time assignment of twenty hours per week.

1. TAs are responsible for the conduct of all instructional activities in the course.
2. The TA will hold office hours to meet with students. The number of office hours per week required should be determined in consultation with the professor who is assigned to another section of the same course.
3. During office hours, consult with students who have questions, go over examinations with students, and help students assess their standing in the course.
4. The TA will be expected to have and regularly use a WMU email account and their WMU email address will be made available to students. **ALL email communication should be on WMU email accounts.** TAs will not be required to reveal home phone numbers or addresses to students.
5. TAs are responsible for the development and administration of all course examinations.
6. TAs are responsible for the grading of all papers, quizzes and assignments and are responsible for keeping up-to-date, accurate records of grades for each student.
7. At the end of each semester the TA is responsible for calculating final grades and reporting those grades to the Office of the Registrar.
8. TAs must administer course and teaching evaluations in each section each semester. The procedures for administering these evaluations should follow School policy.

RESPONSIBILITIES AS A RESEARCH ASSISTANT

The responsibilities of a research assistant are delineated in the Research Partnership Model

section of this Handbook.

RESPONSIBILITIES AS A CITIZEN SCHOLAR

GAs are expected to participate in the life of the School of Communication. GAs should:

- be involved in G-Co, the School graduate student organization if it is active,
- attend research presentations,
- attend School sponsored events such as the induction into the Alumni Academy and receptions for visiting scholars,
- assist with other activities associated with the School (e.g., interviewing faculty job candidates, helping with recruiting events).

These experiences represent opportunities to learn, to network, and to act fully as citizens of the School of Communication.

GRADUATE APPOINTEE TRAINING

ALL-UNIVERSITY TRAINING

Students receiving graduate appointments will be required to attend an All- University training sponsored by The Graduate College. The School of Communication forwards the names of all incoming GAs to the Graduate College in late spring. The Graduate College communicates all further information about the training directly to the GAs. This training is typically held during the week prior to the first day of instruction in the fall semester. GAs are paid a stipend for their attendance and attendance is mandatory.

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION TRAINING

The School of Communication also provides a training session for GAs. This training features both an orientation to the School and specific training relevant to the assignments within the School. This training is also held during the week prior to the first day of instruction in the fall, and may continue through the first week of classes.

GRADUATE STUDENT RECOGNITION

GRADUATE RESEARCH AND CREATIVE SCHOLAR AWARD

Each year, the School of Communication acknowledges graduate students' contributions to the scholarly and creative activities productivity of our School through the selection of a graduate student whose research/creative activity efforts have been exemplary.

In 1986, the Graduate Studies Council established the All-University Graduate Research and Creative Scholar award to acknowledge graduate students' contributions to the scholarly and artistic productivity of Western Michigan University. We advance the name of our School recipient as our nominee for this All-University honor. If multiple candidates receive nominations, the final decision will be made by a vote of the graduate committee. Awardees receive recognition by the Graduate College reception.

GRADUATE STUDENT TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS AWARD

Each year, the School of Communication acknowledges graduate students' contributions to the teaching mission of our School through the selection of a graduate student whose contributions to classroom instruction have been exemplary.

In 1998, the Graduate Studies Council established the All-University Award for Teaching Effectiveness to honor those graduate students involved in a substantial way in Western Michigan University's instructional effort. We advance the name of our School recipient as

our nominee for this honor. If multiple candidates receive nominations, the final decision will be made by a vote of the graduate committee. Awardees receive recognition by the Graduate College reception.

PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

LEVEL I: ANNUAL ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS REVIEW

The School of Communication follows the academic guidelines as defined in the graduate catalog. Students must receive a grade of B or better in each course designated in their program of study to remain in good academic standing. Students must achieve a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or better in the course work included in their degree program in order to graduate. Graduate students in the School of Communication will report their academic progress in the following areas: performance in theory course(s); performance in research course(s); general academic performance; and capstone experience progress/performance.

LEVEL II: GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Full-time graduate students in the School of Communication may be supported by graduate assistantships. Assistantships typically require the performance of duties related to instruction and/or research. Graduate students assigned to instruction in the School of Communication, in consultation with their supervisory professor, will report their progress in the following areas:

a) performance in instruction; and/or b) contributions to the management of instruction. Graduate students assigned to research in the School of Communication, in consultation with their supervisory professor, will report their progress in the following areas: a) completion of assigned research tasks (quality and timeliness); and b) contributions to the research process and research goals of the project.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS REVIEW PROCEDURES

1. Upon the student's initial enrollment, the School of Communication will provide all newly admitted graduate students with a copy of the School of Communication Graduate Handbook that outlines the progress review criteria and procedure. Students are responsible to review the Graduate catalog sections that outline the student code, the requirements and expectations of graduate study, the research misconduct policy, the intellectual property policy, and the conduct for appeals. The students are also responsible for being familiar with sections of the Graduate catalog that state the consequences for the graduate student of an unsatisfactory review.
2. Mid-March the Director of Graduate Studies will send a reminder to faculty advisors and to all graduate students who have been enrolled in courses in the past year that the student must submit an annual academic review form, **Form IX: Annual Review of Academic Performance**, by April 15.
3. The graduate student will complete Form IX providing data regarding individual academic progress. Students should complete the form in consultation with their academic advisor and obtain their advisor's signature on the completed form. Form IX shall be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies for review.
4. The Director of Graduate Studies will review the academic performance of each graduate student. The Director will assess the student's academic progress according to categories established by the university's academic guidelines: good standing, academic warning, continued probation, probation removed, academic dismissal.

Students experiencing academic performance difficulties will meet with the Director of Graduate Studies and their faculty advisor to review the progress report and to discuss the student's options and possible strategies to address the concern.

5. At his/her discretion, the Director of Graduate Studies may seek the advice and counsel of the Graduate Committee to address/resolve individual performance concerns.
6. Copies of the review will be given to the student's faculty advisor and the student. These reviews will become a part of the student's permanent file.
7. Students may appeal an academic dismissal through the established School of Communication/Graduate College appeals procedures.

ASSISTANTSHIP PERFORMANCE REVIEW PROCEDURES

Students holding graduate appointments will be provided with performance reviews twice each semester. Approximately mid-semester, the Director of Graduate Studies will send a reminder to faculty advisors and to all graduate assistants to schedule a mid-semester progress report no later than the end of the month. **If the results of the first performance review are unsatisfactory**, a second performance review will be conducted at the end of the semester assignment.

1. For each performance review graduate assistants should complete **Form X: Graduate Assistant Performance Review** in consultation with their supervising professors in instructional and research areas. Both the student and the faculty supervisor will sign the form.
2. The supervising professor and the graduate teaching assistants may review syllabi, teaching evaluations grade distributions, teaching philosophy, innovative teaching strategies and/or assignments during the discussion of performance.
3. The supervisory professor and the graduate research assistant may review descriptions of the student's tasks/responsibilities and research contributions.
4. Students then should obtain their advisor's signature on the completed form and submit to the Director of Graduate Studies for review.
5. The Director will review the progress reports and will assess the student's progress regarding graduate assistant responsibilities. If needed to clarify roles and responsibilities, the Director of Graduate Studies will hold a consultation with the student and his/her faculty supervisor.
6. The second performance reviews occurring at the end of the semester may result in judgments according to the following categories: reappointment; reappointment with conditions; reappointment denied.
7. At his/her discretion, the Director of Graduate Studies may seek the advice and counsel of the Graduate Committee to address/resolve individual performance concerns.
8. Copies of the review will be given to the student's faculty advisor and the student. These reviews will become a part of the student's permanent file.
9. Students who are not making satisfactory progress must consult with the Director of Graduate Studies and their faculty advisor by the last working day of the semester of review.
10. Students may appeal a reappointment decision through petitioning the Director of the School of Communication. An appeal must be filed within five working days of the date on the letter of notification. The Director of the School of Communication will respond in writing within five working days after receipt of the appeal.

GRADUATE POLICIES: THE GRADUATE COLLEGE AND THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

GRADUATE CATALOG

Students should review the WMU graduate catalog for a full description of all graduate college-related content.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are encouraged to review the academic integrity policy in the graduate catalog. If you have any questions about the policy or the procedures for addressing violations of the policy, please contact your faculty advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies.

ACADEMIC STANDING

All graduate students must earn a degree program grade point average of at least 3.0 to satisfy University requirements. An overall grade point average (GPA) will be included as part of the student transcript. The academic standards policy is intended to encourage satisfactory progress toward that end.

Good Standing: A graduate student is in good standing whenever that student's degree program grade point average is at least 3.0.

Warning: Whenever the grade point average for any enrollment period is less than 3.0, but the degree program grade point average is 3.0 or above, the student will be warned.

Probation: If a student's degree program grade point average falls below 3.0, the student will be placed on probation.

Extended Probation: The student will be placed on extended probation at the discretion of the academic department housing the student's program when, following a semester on probation, the student's overall grade point average is below 3.0 and their grade point average for the enrollment period is 3.0 or above.

Final Probation: The student will be placed on final probation at the discretion of the academic department housing the student's program when, following a semester on extended probation, the student's overall grade point average is below 3.0 and the grade point average for the enrollment period is 3.0 or above.

Probation Removed: When the conditions of good standing are restored, probation will be removed.

Dismissal: Students on probation or extended probation who fail to achieve at least a 3.0 grade point average for the enrollment period, or students on final probation who fail to achieve a 3.0 overall grade point average will be dismissed from the University.

ACADEMIC DISMISSAL AND READMISSION

A graduate student may be dismissed from the University for academic reasons, for violations of academic integrity policies, or for violations of the student code. Dismissed students may appeal for readmission.

APPEAL PROCEDURE

Dismissed degree seeking Communication graduate students must request readmission through

the School of Communication.

Dismissed students must apply for readmission through the normal admission process. The student will send a Readmission Application to the Admissions Office, which in turn will forward the student's Readmission Application and records folder to the School of Communication, specifically to the Graduate Committee, for decision on readmission.

Upon appeal by the student, the School of Communication Graduate Committee will determine whether to readmit the student. The readmission must have been granted by the School of Communication Graduate Committee in order for the student to register. The appeal must be initiated and the decision made by the Graduate Committee prior to the subsequent semester's last day to add classes.

IMMEDIATE READMISSION

A dismissed student has the option to petition the School of Communication for immediate readmission. The Director of the School of Communication shall refer the petition to the Graduate Committee for review and recommendation. The Graduate Committee then may elect to not readmit the student at all, to readmit the student immediately, or to readmit the student for a later enrollment period. The Graduate Committee may also elect to readmit the student on Probation status or Extended Probation status or Final Probation status. If the petition for immediate readmission is received in summer I or summer II, the Director of the School of Communication and the Director of Graduate Studies shall meet and review the petition. In all cases, consultation with appropriate School of Communication graduate faculty shall be a part of the petition review.

ACTIVE ADMISSION STATUS

An admitted graduate student retains active admission status for one year from the date of admission, as well as for one year from the date of the last enrollment. **If a student's active admission status lapses, he/she must apply to Graduate Admissions for re-admission,** which is subject to School of Communication approval and program requirements at the time of re-entry.

CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT

For only the thesis capstone option, students must be continuously enrolled. Continuous enrollment is defined as enrollment in fall and spring semesters from the initial enrollment to the semester in which the student graduates. If the student will graduate in summer I or summer II session, the student must be enrolled in the session. Note for students not enrolled in summer I or II, pre-enrollment in the subsequent fall semester is necessary for access to library resources during summer I and II.

DEGREE PROGRAM GPA

Both an overall grade point average (GPA) and a within-program GPA will be computed for graduate students. Good standing will be based only on the within-program GPA and thus will reflect actual performance within the discipline.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 is a federal law which requires that an educational institution will maintain confidentiality of student education records. WMU accords all rights under the law to students. No one outside the University shall have access to, nor will the University disclose any information from, students' education records without the written consent of students, except to personnel within the University, to officials of other institutions in which students seek to enroll, to persons or organizations

providing students financial aid, to accrediting agencies carrying out their accreditation function, to persons in compliance with a judge's order, and to persons in an emergency in order to protect the health and safety of students or other persons.

All requests from outside the University for information in official records of individual students must be referred to the Registrar's Office, in accordance with FERPA. Only the Registrar is authorized at the University to approve the release of student records in excess of normal Student Directory information. Students also have the option of withholding this information from publication by notifying the Registrar's Office in writing; such notification must be given every semester/session within the official drop/add period.

The practical implications of this law for graduate students who are teaching assistants also include:

1. Do not reveal a student's educational record to a parental request.
2. Do not post student grades by name or any portion of their social security number.
3. Do not send student grades via email or the Internet.
4. Do not leave student papers in an open area, unattended. Students should not sort through papers to find their own.
5. Grade sheets should be handled in a confidential manner.
6. The progress of any student can only be discussed with that student, unless prior written consent of the student has been obtained.

GRADES

Credit in Degree Program: Credit toward a graduate degree or certificate program will be granted only for courses in which a grade of "C" (2.0) or better is earned. In addition, the student must still meet the minimum standard for overall graduate grade-point average (3.0 for master's, specialist and doctoral students).

Credit (CR) or No Credit (NC): The Credit/No Credit grading system (A, BA, B = Credit; CB, C, DC, D, E = No Credit) is used in all 7000-level courses (e.g., independent research, theses, professional project), as well as some departmental courses and programs approved by the Graduate Studies Council. The student's permanent record will indicate "CR" when the course is passed and "NC" when the course is failed.

Incomplete Grade: An incomplete grade is a temporary grade given for work which is passing in quality but lacking quantity to meet course objectives. It is assigned when an instructor, in consultation with the student, concludes that extenuating circumstances prevent the completion of course requirements. Incompletes, except when given in COM 7000 (thesis credits), which are not removed within one year, will be recorded as a failing grade. Faculty will not give the incomplete except for circumstances clearly outside the student's control. The grade cannot be given to avoid a low grade. It also should not be given when it would be in the student's best interest to re-enroll in a course.

REPEAT COURSE POLICY

With the exception of courses that are approved by the University Curriculum Review Policy as repeatable for credit (e.g. multiple topic or umbrella courses), only one course may be repeated during the student's master's program in the School of Communication at WMU. Permission to retake a course must be obtained from the student's faculty advisor and must be approved by the School's Director of Graduate Studies and the Dean of the Graduate College before registration for the course to be repeated takes place (form available at the Graduate College web site). In the review of the student's request, the Director of Graduate Studies shall consider the student's overall performance and space availability in classes. The original grade for the

course will remain on the student's transcript, and both the original and repeated course will be computed into the degree program grade point average.

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION CO-AUTHORSHIP POLICY

EXPECTATIONS FOR GOOD PRACTICE IN CO-AUTHORSHIP

The School of Communication values collaborative research and creative activities as part of a culture of engaged scholarship. Therefore, it rewards co-authorship and encourages partnerships between faculty members and students. The parties in such partnerships must give due consideration to differences in power, expertise and status that naturally exist between faculty and students. In the spirit of a student-centered research university, faculty also must appreciate that they continue to function as teachers in scholarly partnerships with students. This means, among other things, that they must exercise leadership and keep the students' best interests in view.

VALUES STATEMENT

In a responsive and ethical academic community, giving appropriate credit for research contributions should be based on the values of fairness, informed choice, truthfulness and the promotion of each other's wellbeing.

- The value of fairness calls on collaborators to justly apportion credit for research and creative activities. This means that the parties should receive the credit they deserve, regardless of extraneous factors, such as status or financial compensation.
- The value of informed choice recognizes each party's right to participate equally in the decision-making process regarding what kind of contribution warrants authorship and which authorship order is appropriate. Because faculty have more experience and knowledge regarding the research process, they are expected to inform students about relevant factors so that students are in a position to participate fully in the decision-making process.
- The value of truthfulness is relevant because authorship functions as a kind of guarantee to the research community regarding the competence and expertise of the contributors. To the extent that either party gets undeserved credit, the skills of the parties are falsely represented to others, which may result in unfair professional advantages and other injustices.
- The promotion of each other's wellbeing calls on the parties to help each other achieve desirable ends and to avoid injuring each other during the research process. At a minimum, this involves guarding against exploitation. Ideally, this involves benefits such as making specific contributions to a manuscript, making the research process smooth and rewarding, and enhancing each other's reputation.

GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING AUTHORSHIP AND AUTHORSHIP ORDER

Faculty and students should consider the following guidelines when deciding together about authorship:

- The parties should communicate candidly at the **beginning** of each project about the steps in the research process, what constitutes a substantial intellectual contribution, the meaning and importance of co-authorship, the degree of supervision required, and the expectations that both will agree on for a given level of authorship credit. Faculty should provide students with a realistic picture of their options and encourage them to carefully consider their degree of participation and credit. Both parties should be candid about demands on their time, career requirements and work habits. Students should understand that their contributions, with appropriate credit, may be included in reports, applications and other documents authored by the faculty member. This discussion should culminate in mutual

agreement on the terms of the collaboration between student and faculty member. The parties must put their agreement in writing.

- In addition to communicating about authorship at the outset of a project, collaborators should be open to continuing negotiation of authorship credit as changes in circumstances and the demands of publication warrant.
- Anyone who makes a substantial intellectual contribution to a project deserves co-authorship. Such contributions may include a critical review of the literature, making data analysis decisions, and writing the discussion section of an article.
- Contributions that are not intellectual in nature, but are nevertheless necessary for the completion of a project, may result in co-authorship upon mutual agreement of the parties involved. Examples of such contributions may include transcribing interview data, acting as a confederate in an experiment, or conducting a library search.
- Financial compensation for either the student or faculty member does not determine authorship by itself. For example, a student should not be denied credit merely because she is being paid for conducting a given research task. By the same token, the simple fact of volunteering to help with a research project – regardless of the kind of contribution made – does not necessarily warrant credit.
- Order of authorship depends on the level of each party's contribution to the project overall. As the research process unfolds, the order may change. Authors may be added or dropped. However, any such change calls for consultation among all the relevant parties.
- Whenever the parties determine that they have contributed equally to a project, any authorship order is acceptable as long as it is determined by mutual consent. An impartial criterion, such as alphabetical order, is recommended.
- As a rule, publications or conference presentations resulting from student projects such as theses, dissertations, class assignments and independent study projects – should have the student as lead author. Faculty will be listed as co-authors if their contributions are substantial. This should be discussed between faculty and student.
- If the parties in a research partnership cannot agree on authorship after openly discussing the relevant issues on repeated occasions, they should have recourse to a third-party mediation process as determined by departmental policy. This policy will include a provision for students to take their concerns directly to a third party in extreme circumstances.

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION MENTORING POLICY

EXPECTATIONS FOR GOOD PRACTICE IN MENTORING PARTNERSHIPS

The School of Communication values mentoring partnerships between faculty and students as part of a culture of engaged scholarship. The main goal of a mentoring partnership is to guide the student in professional, academic, and personal growth. In the spirit of a student-centered research university, the mentor ideally equips the mentee to become independent in the field and to develop into a peer as a mentoring partnership progresses. Ideally, mentoring is valued as part of the faculty's teaching role. The responsibility for the mentoring partnership does not rest solely on faculty members. Students also have responsibilities to the mentoring partnership. However, both parties must give due consideration to differences in power, expertise and status that naturally exist between faculty and students.

VALUE STATEMENT

Mentoring partnerships should be based on the following values: candid communication, respect for each other's interests, mutual accountability, and the promotion of each other's wellbeing.

- Candid communication calls on the parties to forthrightly express goals, expectations, and concerns so that their commitments to each other can be based on

realistic assessments regarding risks and benefits. Candor establishes trust, but also implies that constructive criticism of professional standards is to be expected.

- Respect for each other's interests calls on both parties to appreciate the worth of the other's research, career, and academic goals, not just their own. This value draws attention to the fact that diverse interests can be complementary. It also recognizes that mentees deserve help developing their own research agendas and they should not merely be expected to adopt those of their mentors. Finally, it recognizes that mentors have discretion about how to allocate their multiple academic commitments.
- Mutual accountability is relevant because both parties are responsible for meeting each other's expectations if the partnership is to be mutually beneficial. In other words, both parties must do their part. For example, mentees are responsible for making timely progress on projects, and mentors are responsible for providing timely feedback on those projects.
- Lastly, the mentoring partnership should lend itself to the promotion of each other's wellbeing. At a minimum, both parties should refrain from exploiting each other. Mentors, due to their expertise and experience in the field, also should alert mentees to the professional consequences of their actions and ensure that they have appropriate opportunities for development in the field.

EXPECTATIONS OF A MENTORING PARTNERSHIP

The following expectations provide a starting point for new mentoring partnerships as well as a reference point for ongoing partnerships. The parties should understand and agree to them.

Expansion of such expectations may be negotiated by the mentor/mentee pair as they see fit.

- Initiate and maintain an ongoing discussion of expectations and goals, including the nature of the relationship (e.g., how to address each other, how much personal information to share, etc.) The parties should be prepared to negotiate new arrangements as circumstances, abilities, and interests change. Because faculty members have more experience and knowledge regarding the field, they are expected to inform students about relevant factors so that students are in a position to participate fully in any decision-making processes regarding the mentoring partnership.
- Investigate and clarify each other's interests, skills, work habits, availability, etc., prior to and/or during the initial stages of the mentoring partnership. By learning about each other, both parties can assess their willingness and ability to join in a mutually beneficial and satisfying partnership in which they can pursue projects and goals that are meaningful to them.
- Acknowledge mutual accountability for accomplishing necessary tasks and routines, such as keeping in regular contact and completing tasks in a timely manner.

GUIDELINES FOR RESOLVING UNMET EXPECTATIONS

The following guidelines provide a framework for either or both parties of the mentoring partnership to follow when expectations are not met. If needed, a 3rd party mediation process, in which both faculty and graduate student interests are represented, may be used to help address and resolve such issues. Note that this process is available to both mentees and mentors. Issues should be addressed in the following manner:

1. Both parties should communicate concerns to each other EARLY in the partnership.
2. Use the outlined expectations as discussion points, and make repeated attempts, if possible, to address concerns.
3. If concerns or issues cannot be resolved or renegotiated, either party may initiate

the 3rd party mediation process as determined by departmental policy. This policy will include a provision for students to take their concerns directly to a third party in extreme circumstances.

4. If the partnership ends at significant cost to the mentee (for example, the mentor is the student's thesis advisor), other faculty members should work together to ensure that the student has another mentoring opportunity (e.g., replace a fellow faculty member in a troubled partnership).

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The rights and responsibilities of graduate students at Western Michigan University are delineated in the graduate catalog.

SUMMER TEACHING ASSISTANT SELECTION GUIDELINES

Graduate assistantships are awarded for one academic year: fall and spring semesters. Occasionally we, through the College of Arts and Sciences, are able to offer GA positions in the summer sessions. When such funding is available, all GAs will be notified of the availability of summer funding.

TIME LIMIT FOR COMPLETION OF DEGREE

After admission, all requirements for degree must be completed within seven years preceding the date on which the degree is conferred. Students whose degrees are taken primarily through part-time study have the option of requesting an extension from the graduate dean. Extension beyond the seven years may also be granted for other students by the dean of the Graduate College for such legitimate reasons as illness, injury or hardship. In such situations, the student and department must demonstrate how the student will bring up to date the content knowledge from courses taken more than seven years before the projected date of graduation.

TRANSFERRING GRADUATE CREDITS

Some graduate credits earned at other institutions may be eligible for transfer credit to your master's program. According to University policy, transfer credits will be recorded on the WMU transcript as "Credit" (CR) only at the time of graduation and will not be calculated into the honor points earned and the grade point average at WMU. **Grades and honor points do not transfer; only credits transfer.**

Official University policy states that a student enrolled in a master's program must complete a minimum of 24 semester hours at WMU. Any credits transferred into a master's program from other universities may not exceed 16 hours.

Therefore, in the School of Communication master's program, six (6) semester hours (3 and 4 quarter or term hours transfer as two (2) semester credit hours) of graduate credit may be transferred from other schools if the following conditions are met:

- The credits were earned at an institution accredited for graduate study and the student received a grade of "B" (3.0) or better. Further, the student's overall grade point for all graduate work taken at the other institution must also be a "B" (3.0) or better.
- The credit must have been earned within a six-year period prior to graduation from WMU, is represented on an official transcript from the other university, and is identified as graduate credit.
- In the School of Communication, the student's faculty advisor must verify that the transfer credits contribute to the student's degree program and should be included in the student's Permanent Program of Study.

- The student's Permanent Program of Study with the transfer credits should be submitted for approval by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Director of the School of Communication.

4+1 HOPE – WMU PARTNERSHIP – TRANSFERRING UNDERGRADUATE CREDITS AND CREDITS BY EXAM

- Upon acceptance, meet with the director of graduate studies to prepare an appropriate program of study that includes the course credits to transfer up to six course credits as electives and up to six course credits that will count as credit-by-examination.
- See content earlier in this document about which Hope undergraduate courses are eligible for transfer credit and credit by exam.
- If adding credits by examination (COM 7100 and/or COM 7120), share the content with the director of graduate studies for review by the graduate committee. Upon approval, these credits will count as electives to the master's degree.
- A letter listing which undergraduate graduate courses will be counted in the master's degree will be sent to the student and will be included in the graduate file.

WMU RESEARCH MISCONDUCT POLICY

The section summarizes WMU's research misconduct policy; it is NOT intended to provide students with a comprehensive description of the policy. See <https://wmich.edu/policies/research-misconduct>

INTRODUCTION

Research rests on a foundation of public support and mutual trust. Therefore, any allegation of research misconduct, irrespective of discipline, is a serious matter to be dealt with deliberately. This is necessary to reassure the public and ourselves that our traditional standards are upheld, for the integrity of Western Michigan University (WMU), those associated with it, and the discipline involved. This document contains the University's Research Misconduct Policy and specifies the procedures and appropriate safeguards for responding to allegations of research misconduct.

POLICY CONDITIONS

At WMU, research misconduct as defined by this document is prohibited. Researchers shall comply with all applicable local, state, and federal laws, regulations and guidelines, and University policies, as well as contractual and grant requirements.

This policy applies to all persons affiliated with WMU - including, but not limited to, faculty, students, trainees, and all members of the research staff. In addition, allegations of research misconduct involving students are subject to the normal disciplinary rules governing students, but will be reviewed, as appropriate, under this policy.

The policy applies to: (a) the conduct of research and/or related activities, whether or not the research is externally funded; (b) the presentation and/or publication of research results; and (c) the process of applying for research funds. Persons found to have committed research misconduct are subject to discipline, up to and including discharge or expulsion. In addition, the findings will, where appropriate, be reported to external entities or authorities and the external entity or authority may take additional action. Disciplinary action proceedings shall be in accordance with applicable University policies, codes, procedures, and/or collective bargaining agreements.

This policy is limited to research misconduct occurring within six years of the date on which the Office of Research and Innovation receives an allegation of misconduct. Exceptions to the six year limit include renewed allegations of misconduct and those

having substantial effect on the health or safety of the public.

DEFINITION OF RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

According to the relevant federal regulations, research misconduct is fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other practices that seriously deviate from those commonly accepted within the academic community for proposing, performing, reviewing or in reporting research results. Research misconduct is to be distinguished from honest error and differences of interpretation. A finding of research misconduct requires that: a) there is a significant departure from accepted practices of the relevant research community; b) the misconduct is committed intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly; and c) the allegation is demonstrated by a preponderance of the evidence. (§ 93.103, 42 CFR Part 93)

Research Misconduct at WMU includes, **but is not limited to** the following:

- A. **Fabrication:** Making up data or results and recording or reporting them.
- B. **Falsification:** Manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.
- C. **Plagiarism:** The appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.
- D. **Abuse of confidentiality,** including use of ideas and preliminary data gained from:
 - 1. Access to privileged information through the opportunity for editorial review of manuscripts submitted to journals, and
 - 2. The peer review of proposals being considered for external funding or by internal committees, such as the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB), Faculty Research and Creative Activities Support Fund (FRACASF), or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).
- E. **Misuse of data,** including the reporting of incomplete results where the reporting of all results would influence any conclusions that might be drawn.
- F. **Failure to comply** with policies on human subjects, radiation use, or animal care and use.

DISCRIMINATION–COMPLAINTSANDGRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Western Michigan University, in accordance with the law, prohibits discrimination in the provision of all student instruction, activities, and programs. Discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, height, weight, family status, or marital status shall not be tolerated in the determination of eligibility, participation, or grading for any courses or program established for the benefit of students unless otherwise provided by law.

Students who have inquiries about the University's Anti-Discrimination Policy or about anti-discrimination laws, including Title IX and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or who have complaints of prohibited discrimination, may file their inquiries and complaints with the Affirmative Action Officer, 1220 Adrian Trimpe Building 387-6316, <https://wmich.edu/policies/non-discrimination> The Affirmative Action Officer will receive and investigate complaints of prohibited discrimination filed with him/her by students and may assist the students in resolving their concerns. The complaint, an oral allegation or charge against the University, an employee(s), or agent, stating prohibited discrimination has occurred, must be filed with the Affirmative Action Officer or professor, instructor, or program director within fourteen (14) calendar days of events or knowledge of events giving rise to the complaint. A complaint must be filed by the student and discussed with the Affirmative Action Officer before any formal grievance can be initiated.

The Affirmative Action Officer will make reports and recommendations to the complaining students and to the academic dean or program director concerned. In the event the student's complaint is not satisfactorily resolved, the student may file a formal written grievance. Formal written grievances protesting prohibited discrimination shall be filed in accordance with the Anti-Discrimination Grievance Procedure for Students.

A grievance is defined as a formal written allegation by a student(s) that there has been a violation of the University's Anti-Discrimination Policy or a discriminatory application of official University policies, procedures, rules, or regulations regarding student rights or privileges. Any student(s) who wants to file such a grievance should contact the Office of Institutional Equity, 1220 Adrian Trimpe Building (387-6316). The grievance must be filed with the Office of Institutional Equity on an official University Grievance Form and be signed by the student(s) involved. The grievance must be timely, state all facts relevant to the protested events, indicate when the incident(s) occurred, and specify the discriminatory acts and policies, rules, or regulations involved. The Office of Institutional Equity will serve as an intermediary for written grievances and is to receive copies of all grievance correspondence. Any student(s) filing a written grievance may choose to have a representative present at any step in the Grievance Procedure, provided the Office of Institutional Equity is given at least twenty-four (24) hours notice prior to the concerned meeting. For more information see the WMU graduate catalog

THE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

STEP 1: DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL

A formal grievance must be filed with the Office of Institutional Equity no later than thirty (30) calendar days after the event or events being grieved took place. The Office of Institutional Equity will then forward the grievance to the Step 1 representative, who will be the Department Head or any other person designated by the appropriate Vice President to respond to the grievance. The Step 1 representative must provide a written answer within fourteen (14) calendar days after receiving the formal grievance.

STEP 2: APPEAL TO THE VICE-PRESIDENTIAL LEVEL

If the grievance is not resolved at Step 1, the student may appeal to the appropriate Vice President within seven (7) calendar days after receiving the departmental representative's written answer. The student must file the appeal with the Office of Institutional Equity using an official University appeal form. The Office of Institutional Equity will, in turn, notify the departmental representative and the appropriate Vice President of the student's appeal. The appropriate Vice President or his/her designated representative will then arrange a meeting with the grievant, his/her representative (if requested), and any other individuals who may help resolve the grievance. This meeting must be held within fourteen (14) calendar days after the appropriate Vice President or his/her designee hearing the appeal receives the grievance from the Office of Institutional Equity. Within seven (7) calendar days after this meeting, the appropriate Vice President or his/her designee hearing the appeal will communicate an answer in writing to the involved parties.

STEP 3: APPEALS TO THE PRESIDENTIAL LEVEL

If the grievance has not been resolved at Step 2, it may be appealed to the University President. The Office of Institutional Equity must receive the appeal within seven (7) calendar days after the grievant receives the written Step 2 answer. The President, at his/her discretion, will handle the grievance personally or will designate a representative to conduct a hearing or investigation of the grievance, report findings, and recommend a decision. The President will make the final grievance decision and communicate it to the appropriate parties.

In addition to filing a grievance with the University's Office of Institutional Equity, the student may file a complaint directly with the Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, or pursue both avenues of complaint resolution.

PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ON RACIAL AND ETHNIC HARMONY

Western Michigan University is firmly committed to the principles of racial equality and nondiscrimination. On its campus, students, faculty, and staff of many races and ethnic backgrounds live and work closely together day by day in offices, classrooms, and residence halls. This racial and ethnic mix brings richness and diversity to the cultural, intellectual, and personal dimensions of campus life. The University benefits from this diversity and seeks to enhance it.

All members of the University are expected to contribute to an atmosphere of racial and ethnic harmony on campus, displaying tolerance for cultural differences and courtesy and civility in discourse with students, faculty, and staff of diverse backgrounds and origins. In this environment there is no room for any derogatory comments of a racial nature, be they in the form of slurs, posters, songs, jokes, graffiti, or the like.

Most members of the campus community need not be reminded of the institutional position in this regard. The very few who need the admonition must realize that the University will take the strongest possible action, including dismissal, against those who through racist acts bring discord to this campus.

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

INTRODUCTION

Western Michigan University is committed to an environment that encourages fair, humane, and beneficial treatment of all faculty, staff, and students. In accordance with that fundamental objective, the University has a continuing commitment to assure equal opportunity and to oppose discrimination because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, handicap, height, weight, or marital status. Therefore, in that same perspective, neither sexual harassment nor sexism will be tolerated at Western Michigan University. It is expected that each member of the University community will consider himself/herself responsible for the proper observance of this policy. For more information see the WMU graduate catalog

DEFINITIONS

SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual conduct which is related to any condition of employment or evaluation of student performance. This definition is intended to include more than overt advances toward actual sexual relations. It applies as well to repeated or unwarranted sex-related statements, unwelcome touching, sexually explicit comments, and/or graphics. All persons should be sensitive to situations that may affect or cause the recipient discomfort or humiliation or may display a condescending sex-based attitude towards a person. Sexual harassment is illegal under both state and federal law. In some cases, it may be subject also to prosecution under the criminal sexual conduct act. Conduct will be defined as sexual harassment when any or all three of the following conditions exist:

- The sex-related situations are unwelcome by the recipient. *
- A specific or implied connection with employment or student status is involved.
- The sexual harassment continues after the recipient has made it clear that the conduct is unwelcome. *

*In some cases of overt physical sexual conduct, a blatant threat if sexual favors are not given, or promised reward in exchange for sexual favors, no notice that the conduct is unwelcome shall be necessary, and a finding of sexual harassment may be based on a single occurrence.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE:

Sexual harassment and sexism constitute acts of misconduct. Therefore, whenever such acts are reported and confirmed, prompt disciplinary action will be taken, up to and including discharge. However, to enable the University to act through these formal procedures, employees and students are encouraged to report such incidents. Employees should report such conduct to the Director of Compensation and Employee Relations, 1275 Seibert Administration Building (387-3620). Students should report it to the Office of Institutional Equity, 1220 Adrian Trimpe Building (387-6316).

The Director of Compensation and Employee Relations and the Associate Vice President for Institutional Equity shall jointly establish appropriate procedures to implement this policy. They shall also investigate thoroughly any complaints of alleged sexual harassment or sexism, and then report the results of such investigations to the President of the University.

If you hesitate to file a sexual harassment complaint for fear of retaliation, you need to know that: Federal and state law, as well as University policies, protect any person who has filed a complaint of sexual harassment or sexism from being intimidated, threatened, coerced, discriminated against or any other form of retaliation. Likewise, protection is afforded any person who testifies, assists or participates, in any manner, in an investigation resulting from a sexual harassment complaint. Therefore, any individual so harassed, intimidated or otherwise retaliated against may file a complaint alleging harassment, intimidation or retaliation. Such complaint should be filed with the Office of Institutional Equity, 1220 Adrian Trimpe Building (387-6316).

STUDENT CONDUCT: WMU EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

CODE OF HONOR

Western Michigan University (WMU) is a student-centered research university that forges a responsive and ethical academic community. Its undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs are built upon intellectual inquiry, investigation, discovery, an open exchange of ideas, and ethical behavior. Members of the WMU community respect diversity, value the cultural differences of those around them, and engender a sense of social obligation. Because of these values, all individuals are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and civil manner. This includes exemplifying academic honesty, integrity, fairness, trustworthiness, personal responsibility, respect for others, and ethical conduct. These attributes are exhibited in the University setting as well as in the community. Members of the University community abide by this code out of commitment to serve as responsible citizens of the University, the community, the nation, and the world. Responsibility for fulfilling the obligations of the code of honor is shared by the students, faculty, and every other member of the University community.

Statement approved in 2005 by the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate and Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

See <https://wmich.edu/conduct/expectations-students> for a full description of the student code of honor and information pertaining to misconduct

DEFINITIONS OF ACADEMIC HONESTY VIOLATIONS

According to the WMU Office of Student Conduct (<https://wmich.edu/conduct/honesty> for more information), if a student is uncertain about an issue of academic honesty, he/she should consult the faculty member to resolve questions in any situation prior to the submission of the academic exercise. Violations of academic honesty include but are not limited to the following:

CHEATING

Definition: Cheating is intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids or other devices or materials in any academic exercise.

Clarification

1. Students completing any examination are prohibited from looking at another student's examination and from using external aids (for example, books, notes, calculators, conversation with other) unless specifically allowed in advance by the faculty member.
2. Students may not have others conduct research or prepare work for them without advance authorization from the faculty member. This includes, but is not limited to the services of commercial term paper companies.

FABRICATION, FALSIFICATION AND FORGERY

Definition: Fabrication is the intentional invention and unauthorized alteration of any information or citation in an academic exercise. Falsification is a matter of altering information while fabrication is a matter of inventing or counterfeiting information for use in any academic exercise or University record. Forgery is defined as the act to imitate or counterfeit documents, signatures, and the like.

Clarification

1. "Invented" information shall not be used in any laboratory experiment, report of results or academic exercise. It would be improper, for example, to analyze one sample in an experiment and then "invent" data based on that single experiment for several more required analyses.
2. Students shall acknowledge the actual source from which cited information was obtained. For example, a student shall not take a quotation from a book review and then indicate that the quotation was obtained from the book itself.
3. Falsification of University records includes altering or forging any University document and/or record, including identification material issued or used by the University.

MULTIPLE SUBMISSION

Definition: Multiple submission is the submission of substantial portions of the same work (including oral reports) for credit more than once without authorization from instructors of all classes for which the student submits the work.

Clarification

Examples of multiple submission include submitting the same paper for credit in more than one

course without all faculty members' permission; making revisions in a credit paper or report (including oral presentations) and submitting it again as if it were new work.

PLAGIARISM

Definition: Plagiarism is the use of someone else's language, ideas, or other material without making the source(s) evident in situations where there is a legitimate expectation of original work. Plagiarism does not occur when efforts to promptly identify sources by making source use apparent to the audience of the submitted material are obvious. Plagiarism may not necessarily include mistakes in citation style. A legitimate expectation of original work exists for numerous circumstances, including (but not limited to): scholarly writing, technical presentations and papers, conference presentations and papers, online discussion postings, grant proposals, patents, book and other manuscripts, theses and dissertations, class assignments, artistic works, computer code, algorithms, and other creative works. This definition applies to the entire WMU community, which includes all faculty; students; staff; visiting faculty, scholars, and administrators; and any other person governed by the academic research and other policies of the university. (Passed Faculty Senate, February 4, 2016).

COMPLICITY

Definition: Complicity is intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

Clarification

Examples of complicity include knowingly allowing another to copy from one's paper during an examination or test; distributing test questions or substantive information about the materials to be tested before the scheduled exercise; collaborating on academic work knowing that the collaboration will not be reported; taking an examination or test for another student, or signing another's name on an academic exercise.

Collaboration and sharing information are characteristics of academic communities. These become violations when they involve dishonesty. Faculty members should make clear to students expectations about collaboration and information sharing. Students should seek clarification when in doubt.

ACADEMIC COMPUTER MISUSE

Definition: Academic computer misuse is the use of software to perform work which the instructor has told the student to do without the assistance of software.

GENERAL INFORMATION

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

3rd Floor Sprau Tower, Western Michigan University Kalamazoo, MI
49008-5318
Phone: 269/387-3130; FAX: 269/387-3990
Email: com-grad@wmich.edu

DIRECTOR OF THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

Cynthia Klekar-Cunningham, Ph.D
309 Sprau Tower, 269/387-3133, cynthia.klekar@wmich.edu

DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Julie Apker, Ph.D.
217 Sprau Tower, 269/387-3140, com-grad@wmich.edu

UNDERGRADUATE ADVISOR

Nate Robinson
312 Sprau Tower, 269/387-3197, nathan.w.robinson@wmich.edu

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION SUPPORT STAFF

Andrew Bryant
311 Sprau Tower, 269/387-3160, andrew.d.bryan@wmich.edu

SPRAU TOWER RESOURCES

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION:

- Faculty/Staff offices are located on the second and third floors of Sprau Tower.
- The School of Communication main office, faculty/staff/TA mailboxes, and copy machine are located in the third floor center office.
- Teaching assistants receive laptops for their instructional and academic use. The laptops must be returned to the school during summer breaks and at the conclusion of their appointment.
- Graduate assistant offices are located on the second floor of Sprau Tower. These offices are equipped with telephone.
- Communication and Social Robotics Lab.
- Sprau Tower is a wireless environment.
- Sprau Tower main entrance typically is locked for the night at 5:00 pm.

PLAZA CAFE:

- The Plaza Cafe is located on the ground floor and offers convenience foods such as cold sandwiches, hot dogs, soups, coffee, pretzels, pizza, candy, and beverages.
- Fall & Spring Hours: See posted hours

ATM:

- An ATM is also located on the ground floor of the Miller auditorium parking ramp and is accessible with several different cards with a user fee.

BROWN HALL RESOURCES

THE CLIFFORD CENTER:

- The Clifford Center provides support and educational opportunities to undergraduate majors, undergraduate minors, and graduate students. In addition to supporting active research programs in interpersonal communication, organizational communication, and telecommunications, the Center is the primary support facility for Film, Video and Media Studies program within the School of Communication.
- Facilities include: Audio labs, Video/Audio editing computer lab, Multi Media computer lab, Media Production lab, Media Center with book/journal collection and workstations with internet access.
- Hours of Operation: Please see <https://wmich.edu/communication/cliffordcenter>

BROWN HALL STUDENT LOUNGE:

- Brown Hall has a student lounge for studying which is located on the 2nd floor near the main entry. While a lounge may be designated by department, students from other departments are also welcome. Other lounges may also be found in Brown Hall.

THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

First floor, Walwood Hall, East Campus Phone:

269/387-8212

Website: <https://wmich.edu/grad>

DEAN OF THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

Dr. Christine Byrd-Jacobs

First Floor, Walwood Hall, 269/ 387-8212

christine.byrd@wmich.edu

ALL UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

WMU offers an array of campus resources, some are listed below. Please see the Graduate College website for a complete list.

GRADUATE STUDENT ONLINE ORIENTATION

Those students new to campus and Kalamazoo will find information useful to their transition. Online orientation for graduate students is available through WMU's Elearning system. You will receive information from the Graduate College about access.

ONLINE RESEARCH INTEGRITY COURSE

All new graduate students are required to complete the Graduate College's online research integrity course before the end of their first semester. This training is above and beyond training required for human subjects research. You will receive information from the Graduate College about access. Failure to complete the course will result in a hold on your future enrollment.

COMPUTER ACCOUNTS

All enrolled students at Western Michigan University may have a unified computer account for free. A unified account is a single username. Computing Services is located at the University Computing Center, across from Waldo Library on the second floor. Their phone number is 269-387- 4357 and their website is <http://www.wmich.edu/it>.

EMAIL

Email is provided by the WMU Office of Information Technology. Visit <https://wmich.edu/it/> for information to get started. WMU's Information Technology help desk (269-387-4357) is a good resource for answering any additional questions.

BOOKSTORE

The WMU Bookstore is the source for textbooks, trade and reference books, postal service, electronics, school supplies, gifts, athletic clothing, WMU souvenirs and WMU apparel. WMU Bookstore is the only on-campus bookstore and the only one endorsed by WMU. *Graduate assistants receive a 10% discount on all items except course packs.* The WMU Bookstore is located on the main floor of the Bernhard Center (269-387-3929).

HEALTH CARE

The Sindecuse Health Center (<https://wmich.edu/healthcenter>, 387-3287) is a student-oriented medical clinic providing comprehensive examinations, treatments, urgent care, and minor surgical procedures. All full-time WMU students are assessed a Student Health Fee, which entitles them to use all Health Center services (including Sports Medicine) for minimal charges. Part-time students, non-enrolled students, and all spouses may take advantage of the same services by paying the fee for each semester/session.

HEALTHINSURANCE

The university does not offer student health insurance however enrollment materials and information regarding the Affordable Care Act are available at the Sindecuse Health Center website <https://wmich.edu/healthcenter/about/insurance>. Per TAU contract, Teaching appointees receive a “health care subsidy.”

CAREER AND STUDENT EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Services include career planning sessions, a weekly employment bulletin, maintenance of credentials, career resource center, job interviews, and a variety of workshops and seminars to increase job-seeking skills. The office is located in Ellsworth Hall.
<https://wmich.edu/career>

HOUSING

ON-CAMPUS HOUSING

The University has limited on-campus housing options for graduate students. For information, go to <https://wmich.edu/housing/options> or contact the Housing Office located in Faunce Student Services Building, 3rd floor (387-2175).

OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

There are many apartments, condominiums, houses and duplexes for rent in the Kalamazoo/Portage area. A useful resource is <https://downtownkalamazoo.org/>

COUNSELING

Personal counseling services are available at Sindecuse Health Center (387-1850, <https://wmich.edu/healthcenter/counseling>). The center is staffed with professionally licensed counselors and psychologists and is accredited by the International Association of Counseling Services. Counseling assistance is available free of charge to all actively enrolled students at WMU.

PARKING SERVICES

Parking Services is located at 2507 West Michigan Avenue, at the corner of Knollwood

and West Michigan near the Faunce Student Services Building (387-4609, <https://wmich.edu/parking>) All faculty, staff, and students are eligible to park a vehicle on University property.

You must register your vehicle with parking services and pay a registration fee. Graduate assistants do not have to pay for parking privileges, but you must register your vehicle and receive a parking pass.

PAYROLL INFORMATION

Questions about payroll should be directed to the Payroll Office. They process payroll, including the following: taking deductions for insurance, automatic savings bonds, United Way, credit unions, Miller Auditorium tickets, and athletic tickets. Direct deposit of payroll checks to financial institutions is available, if you complete the appropriate forms. The Payroll Office is located on the top floor of the Seibert Administration Building (387-2935, <https://wmich.edu/payroll/payroll>).

OTHER UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

OFFICE OF FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

This office offers an array of learning communities, seminars, conferences, workshops, online resources, and other resources related to teaching and learning. Services are available to graduate students, faculty and staff who have instructional responsibilities. **Graduate students are welcome to participate OFD events and services.** Visit <https://wmich.edu/facultydevelopment>

INTERNATIONAL ADMISSIONS AND SERVICES

This office is located in Ellsworth Hall (<https://wmich.edu/internationaladmissions>). International students should contact this office for assistance with paperwork such as visas and I-20s, and should contact this office to learn of their rights and obligations as students studying in this country. The office has a website that also offers helpful information about in-country status <https://wmich.edu/internationaladmissions/immigration>. For other questions or concerns, please contact the advisors at OISS-info@wmich.edu

DIVISION OF MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

The Division of Multicultural Affairs promotes a supportive environment for racial/ethnic minority students by providing a range of services and programs that have a positive impact on their academic success and quality of life. The Division has a number of resources for and about multicultural issues. The Division is located in 2260 Ellsworth Hall (387-4420, <https://wmich.edu/multicultural/>)

DISABLED STUDENT RESOURCES AND SERVICES

A wide range of support services is available to assist disabled students and provide guidance to instructors who have disabled students in their classes. The office is located at 2210 Wilbur St. (387- 2116, <https://wmich.edu/disabilityservices>).

LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, GAY & TRANSGENDER STUDENT SERVICES

A variety of programs and services for LBGT students are coordinated through the Department

of Student Activities and Leadership Programs at WMU. Students can access these services at 2315 Faunce Student Services Building (387-2123).

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

The Graduate Student Association (387-8207, <http://www.wmich.edu/gsa/>) reviews services and needs of graduate students; makes recommendations to appropriate officials and offices; recommends graduate students for appointments to university councils and committees; promotes and provides forums for the discussion of academic, social, and community issues as they relate to graduate students; and makes recommendations concerning the distribution of the graduate student assessment fees.

G-CO

If active, G-Co is a registered student organization for all graduate students and accelerated graduate degree students in the School of Communication at WMU. The organization offers professional, academic, and social events. G-Co also serves as a communication network among communication students, the School, and the Graduate College. The organization has a continuously open membership process.

TEACHING ASSISTANT UNION

All graduate assistants who are classified as teaching assistants are members of the Teaching Assistant Union. See <http://www.wmich.edu/academic-labor-relations/agreements/agreements-tau> for contract.