

COMMUNICATION ARTS AND SCIENCES

Degree Requirements

Master of Arts (M.A.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies. (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>)

Students pursuing the M.A. degree in Communication Arts and Sciences must take 2 credits of CAS 590 Colloquium and 3 credits of CAS 602 Supervised Experience in College Teaching; however, the 3 credits of CAS 602 cannot be counted towards the minimum 30 credits required. Students must schedule a review of their program of courses during the first year of residence and receive approval by a duly constituted advisory committee.

A minimum of 30 credits at the 400, 500, 600, or 800 level is required, with at least 18 credits at the 500 and 600 level, combined. If a student is required to write a thesis, at least 6 credits in thesis research (CAS 600 or CAS 610) must be included in the program. If no thesis is required, at least 18 credits must be in 500-level courses. Students choosing to complete a thesis must complete at least 6 credits in thesis research (CAS 600 or CAS 610). Students choosing to complete a scholarly paper must complete at least 18 credits in 500-level courses. Students must schedule a proposal meeting in which their research plan for their thesis is approved by their committee. They are also required to present an oral defense before their committee. The thesis must be accepted by the committee members, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School, and the student must pass the thesis defense.

Although typically discouraged, students in unique circumstances may apply to complete a non-thesis track. Students must apply in advance for acceptance in the non-thesis track and additional course credits will be required, among other differences from the thesis track. The specific requirements for the non-thesis track will be established based on the student's application and subject to approval by the M.A. committee. The non-thesis track requires completion of a scholarly paper in place of the thesis.

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

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Students must take 2 credits of CAS 590 Colloquium and 3 credits of CAS 602 Supervised Experience in College Teaching. Doctoral students must schedule and pass a qualifying examination during their first year. Following completion of the English competence requirement and all courses from the program of study, doctoral students must pass a comprehensive examination to determine their mastery and competence in the discipline of communication. After successful completion of the written and oral component of the comprehensive exam, doctoral candidates must schedule a proposal meeting at which the research plan for their dissertation is approved by their Ph.D. committee. Doctoral candidates must pass a final oral defense of their dissertation before their Ph.D. committee. The dissertation must be accepted by the Ph.D. committee, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School.