

## GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK OF POLICIES

### DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Amended Fall, 2011  
(with corrections February, 2012)

[Note: The policies described in this handbook are effective with the entering class of 2011 unless otherwise noted. Students who entered the program prior to fall, 2011 have the option of following these policies, unless otherwise noted, or those in effect at the time they entered the program, as described in the Graduate Student Handbook “as amended September, 2009.” By way of summary, **certain policies contained in this handbook are required of all students regardless of the year in which the program was entered:** (1) the leave of absence policy (under “Normal Progress”; (2) the policy related to dismissal from the program; and (3) the master’s comprehensive exam for students who enter with a Bachelor’s degree and who seek a master’s degree “along the way” toward the doctorate. In addition, the funding eligibility policy (described under “Good Standing” applies to the entering class of 2012; students who entered prior to that time can use the 18-hour threshold for 5<sup>th</sup> year funding eligibility, described in the

2009 handbook, in place of language in the 2011 revised handbook that refers to entering with either the bachelor's degree or the master's degree.]

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## **Introduction**

This handbook is the official guide to the policies that structure graduate study in the Communication Studies Department at the University of Iowa. The student is responsible for making certain that the various deadlines, requirements, and policies described here are met. A student should talk with his or her advisor if unclear about what something means. If the academic advisor is unable to answer a question, the student should then ask the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). If clarity is still not achieved, the student should go to the Department Executive Officer (DEO). The Graduate College is the next authority in the chain of command with respect to policies that structure graduate study at UI.

All students who have been admitted to the program enter as doctoral candidates. The sections in this handbook outline department policies upon entering the program through defense of the dissertation.

Additionally, if a student entered with a bachelor's degree, he or she might wish to earn the master's degree "along the way." Interests can change, or you might decide that you want to leave the doctoral program with a terminal master's degree. The policies regarding the master's degree are also covered in this handbook.

## **Requirements for the Ph.D. Degree**

### **Total Hours**

The principal purpose of the program of study and research leading to the Ph.D. degree in Communication Studies at the University of Iowa is to develop sophisticated and productive scholars and teachers. The student must earn a minimum of **72** hours of credit, including transfer credits, in order to complete the degree. In addition, the student is expected to take at least **10** hours of dissertation credits, resulting in a minimum total of **82** hours. Dissertation hours are arranged between the student and his or her doctoral advisor and are often begun in the semester in which the student will take the comprehensive exam and complete and defend the prospectus. If a student needs additional coursework below 100-level for proficiency in necessary research tools, the committee may require these hours in addition to those above.

### **Good Standing**

"Good standing" is the global benchmark by which the department assesses a student's progress toward completion of the degree. Good standing is based on three criteria described below: (1) the accumulation of 18 successfully completed hours annually as coursework is completed; (2) maintenance of a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA; and (3) normal progress toward degree completion. Eligibility for funding support is contingent on good standing, which the Graduate Affairs Committee (GAC) evaluates by March 1<sup>st</sup> of each academic year. Assuming good standing status, a student who enters the doctoral program with a bachelor's degree is eligible for five years of departmental funding support. Students who enter with a master's degree in communication or an equivalent discipline are eligible for four years of funding support from the

department. [Note: The preceding underlined portion takes effect for students who enter in the fall of 2012; all students who enter prior to this time can elect to use the eligibility criteria specified in the 2009 handbook related to the threshold of importing 18 or fewer hours.]

**Annual course load.** Students are required to maintain an average of 18 hours minimum per calendar year (January – December) until coursework is completed. “Incompletes” do not count toward the 18 hours. The standard course load for graduate students in the department is 9 hours per semester. In semesters in which the student is taking examinations, a slightly reduced load might be appropriate to allow the extra time for exam preparation, but the 18 hour annual quota must still be met. The department recommends a student with an assistantship not exceed the recommended 9-hour load; those without such other work to perform might be able to take a higher load, but it is not usually recommended that graduate students do more than 12 hours per semester because the work is demanding.

**Required minimum GPA.** Students are required to sustain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 to remain in good standing in the department. No student will be permitted to progress through the doctoral program without a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 on graduate work taken at the University of Iowa.

**Normal progress.** Students are required to maintain normal progress toward degree completion. A graduate student may request up to one year’s leave of absence for medical cause without loss of normal progress status. Reasons for leaves of absence other than medical will result in a failure to maintain normal progress. Failure to maintain normal progress jeopardizes the student’s TA funding eligibility should he or she decide to return to the program at a later date. [Note: The underlined portion above applies to all students regardless of when they entered the program.]

Normal progress includes the following actions by the student:

1. Successful completion of 36:200, Introduction to Research and Teaching, during the first semester in residence.
2. Successful completion of three core courses: 36:371 (Interpersonal Communication Theory); 36:241 (Theories of Mass Communication); and 36:NEED # (Introduction to Rhetoric and Discourse). Students will normally complete this requirement by the 4<sup>th</sup> semester in residence. Transfer hours will not count toward the completion of these three required courses.
3. Successful completion of the Plan of Study document and its oral defense to a doctoral committee by the specified deadline (see “Formation of the Doctoral Committee” and “The Plan of Study” sections below).
4. Successful completion of the Doctoral Comprehensive Exam by the specified deadline (see “The Doctoral Comprehensive Exam” section below).

5. Successful defense of the dissertation prospectus by the specified deadline (see “Dissertation Prospectus” section below).
6. Successful defense of the dissertation and meeting all other degree requirements as established by the Graduate College, including submission of the application for degree, first deposit and final deposit, per the University’s deadlines.

### **The Doctoral Program: Step-by-Step**

#### **Assignment of a Temporary Academic Advisor**

In all cases the academic advisor is the first point of contact with the University administration and should be consulted if a student has any questions or problems concerning departmental policies for graduate students.

Each incoming student will be assigned a temporary academic advisor by the Graduate Affairs Committee (GAC) prior to the first registration. The temporary advisor will be responsible for helping the student select courses for the first term in residence and to decide on the composition of the doctoral committee associated with the defense of the Plan of Study document. A student is free to change advisors at any time, with the prior approval of the new advisor and the prior approval of the DEO of the department. Similarly, any faculty member may refuse to serve as advisor to any student by notifying the DEO of the department. The DEO will be responsible for ensuring that the involved faculty and students are informed in a timely manner when such changes are made. **At any time** a student changes academic advisors or committee composition, the form “Appointment of or Changes in Graduate Committee” must be completed by the student. This form is available on the department’s website: <http://www.uiowa.edu/commstud/resources/>. It is the student’s responsibility to keep paperwork up to date in the main office with respect to committee composition.

#### **Registration: General**

Graduate college guidelines stipulate that .5 appointees may register for not more than 12 semester hours during a semester or 6 semester hours during the eight-week summer session.

A schedule of Communication Studies courses is available online at the following login site: <https://login.uiowa.edu/uip/login.page?service=https://isis5.uiowa.edu/isis/>. After consulting with his or her advisor, the student will need to see the Department Administrator regarding registration. The student will be given important and specific information about the registration process for regular courses and independent study work.

#### **Registration: Guidelines for Independent Studies**

**One credit hour:** Normally entails advanced submission and approval by the professor of a substantive bibliography, independent reading on the part of the student, and two or more meetings with the professor over the course of the semester.

**Two credit hours:** Normally entails advanced submission and approval by the professor of a substantive bibliography, independent reading on the part of the student, sustained writing of some kind, and frequent meetings (at least bi-monthly) with the professor over the course of the semester.

**Three credit hours:** Normally three credit hours of independent study are reserved for course replacement (hence, full syllabus, multiple writing assignments, and weekly meetings with the professor over the course of the semester) and independent research projects (including IRB work).

### **Formation of a Doctoral Committee**

Students who enter with a master's degree in communication or an equivalent body of work are required to form a doctoral committee no later than the second semester of residence. Students who enter with a bachelor's degree are required to form a doctoral committee no later than the third semester of residence. Once a student has an academic advisor (either the person first assigned or one subsequently selected by the student), he or she needs to identify two other departmental faculty to serve on the doctoral committee, usually from inside the primary area of emphasis (i.e., Interpersonal Communication, Media Studies, or Rhetoric and Discourse). The third departmental faculty member will be appointed randomly by the DGS from outside the student's area for purposes of interdisciplinarity. The student should discuss with his or her advisor which faculty members might be willing to serve and are suited to the student's projected areas of expertise, and then he or she should approach them to ask whether they are willing to serve on the doctoral committee. The completed roster of faculty members must be submitted to the DEO for formal approval and appointment by completing the form "Appointment of or Changes in Graduate Committee." This form is available on the department's website: <http://www.uiowa.edu/commstud/resources/>. Again, at any time a student changes academic advisors or committee composition, this form must be completed and submitted for approval to the main office.

The doctoral committee must have four members (including the committee chair). The doctoral committee is the foundation for the comprehensive exam committee, which consists of five members. At the time of the prospectus defense, the fifth committee member must be from outside the department.

The department adheres to the Graduate College's rules regarding retaining committee members, including those who chair a committee, upon their retirement or leaving the University of Iowa. Additionally, should a student wish to add a committee member from another institution, the Graduate College's rules must be followed to seek approval for such a request.

Committee meetings (including but not limited to plan of study meetings, comprehensive exam meetings, prospectus meetings, and dissertation defenses) must adhere to the typical nine-month faculty teaching and service calendar. Hence, dates available for committee meetings during the Fall semester are: Three working days prior to the opening day of classes through the closing day of final exam week, excluding University Holidays and Recesses. Dates available for the Spring semester are: Opening day of classes through the closing day of final exam week, excluding

University Holidays and Recesses. Faculty are not expected to meet for official graduate student committee business between the closing day of final exam week of the Spring semester and three days prior to the opening day of classes Fall semester.

### **The Plan of Study**

The number of graduate credit hours completed at other institutions that will be acceptable for meeting the minimal coursework requirements for the Ph.D. will be determined by the doctoral committee at the oral defense of the Plan of Study document. In no case will more than 30 hours of graduate work from other institutions be accepted.

Students who enter the doctoral program with a master's degree in communication or an equivalent body of work normally defend the proposed Plan of Study document to the doctoral committee in the second semester in residence but no later than the last day of the third semester in residence. Students who enter the doctoral program with a bachelor's degree normally defend the Plan of Study document in the third semester in residence but no later than April 1<sup>st</sup> of the fourth semester in residence.

The Plan of Study document is a substantial argument-based presentation that contains the following elements: (1) articulation of a research philosophy and academic goals; (2) articulation of 2-3 areas of concentration and an argument for their coherence and relevance to the student's research philosophy and academic goals; (3) proposed coursework to be taken at Iowa; (4) an argument for the approval of each imported graduate course from another institution; and (5) a writing sample of sole-authored work completed while in residence in the program (typically a seminar paper completed in the first year of coursework). The student will distribute this document at least two weeks in advance of the defense meeting. The defense meeting will require the student to argue orally on behalf of the proposed Plan of Study and to solicit faculty feedback on the proposed Plan of Study. An unsuccessful defense of the Plan of Study is defined as two or more negative votes against approval of the Plan of Study. A student has until the end of the following semester to gain approval of a revised Plan of Study, normally with the same advisor and doctoral committee. If the revised Plan of Study requirements are not completed by the end of the following semester, the student will be classified as not maintaining normal progress with the meaning and consequences specified in this handbook.

### **The Doctoral Comprehensive Exam**

The main office submits, on the student's behalf, the "Request for Doctoral Comprehensive Exam", and the "Doctoral Plan of Study Summary Sheet." These forms should be submitted to the main office no later than 3 weeks prior to sitting for the comprehensive exam. These forms are available on the department's website: <http://www.uiowa.edu/commstud/resources/>.

The comprehensive exam process includes a pre-comprehensive exam proposal, a scholarly paper, two exam questions based on the approved areas of study, and an oral defense. The oral exam must be completed no later than February 28 of the sixth semester of funding for students entering the program with a M.A. and no later than February 28 of the eighth semester of funding for those entering with a B.A.

The **comprehensive exam committee** is the doctoral committee plus one. It is a five-member committee. This fifth member may be from outside the department but this is not required. However, at the time of the prospectus defense, the fifth person must be from outside the department.

The comprehensive exams must be completed prior to a student sitting for the dissertation prospectus. The prospectus should be defended no later than the end of the sixth semester for students entering with a M.A. and the end of the eighth semester for students with a B.A.

**Pre-comprehensive exam proposal.** Each student will complete a pre-comprehensive exam proposal that identifies at least two areas of study (i.e., those specified in the Plan of Study document). The proposal should include a justification and list of readings for each area. The exam committee will specify the details of the proposal, including appropriate readings for each area. The pre-comprehensive exam proposal should be approved no later than the fourth semester of funding for students entering with a M.A. and no later than the sixth semester for students entering with a B.A. All committee members must approve the proposal. A pre-comprehensive exam meeting is left to the discretion of the committee but is not required.

**Scholarly paper.** All students must submit a scholarly paper that satisfies the standards accorded by their disciplinary interests (including intellectual rigor, theoretical and methodological sophistication, and scholarly contribution). This paper is not a stand-in for an area of study. The paper should be submitted with the answer to the second exam question.

**Written exam.** Students are tested over the areas of study specified in the pre-comprehensive exam proposal. The committee coordinates the exam, ensuring that all members have a role in producing the test. Students have seven days (one week) per question and may complete the exam at the location and time of their choosing. Both questions, distributed sequentially, must be answered within a three-week period that begins with receipt of the first question. Students may complete the written exam more quickly if they desire.

The exam answers themselves should be no more than 15 pages, excluding notes and references. The exam should be formatted with 12-point font and one-inch margins. Because the exam is “take home,” it is expected that students will cite appropriate and relevant sources and include a reference list, endnotes, and/or a bibliography. Students should submit electronic copies of the exam and the scholarly paper to the department’s administrative coordinator.

**Oral exam.** A two-hour oral defense of the exam answers and the scholarly paper must be passed within two weeks of the written exam. If two or more committee members vote not to pass the student’s exam (a holistic assessment of the written answers, scholarly paper, and oral exam), then the exam is not passed.

**Evaluation of the exam.** Each committee member will sign the examination report as satisfactory, reservations, or unsatisfactory within 10 working days from the date of the oral exam, allowing time for the DEO to sign departmental approval and for the department to submit the report to the Graduate College by the deadline. Normally, the complete exam warrant will be

submitted to the Graduate College within fourteen days after the completion of the oral examination. Two “unsatisfactory” votes will make the committee report unsatisfactory.

A vote of “Reservations” will only be used when a faculty member feels that the deficiencies displayed by the student were modest, and can be readily rectified. In the event of a report with two or more votes of “Reservations,” the actions required of the student, by the committee, that are necessary to correct the deficiencies will be recorded and submitted to the Graduate College with the examination report form. Copies of the written statement of necessary actions will be given to the student and all committee members and a copy placed in the student’s academic file in the main office. The statement must specify the time allowed for completion of the aforementioned actions. These actions can include the taking of additional courses or seminars, independent reading, or simply more review and study of prior work. The committee will also specify for the student the method by which mastery of material is to be demonstrated. This may be anything from a repeat of the entire examination to submission of a paper.

In the case of a report of unsatisfactory on a comprehensive examination, the committee may grant the candidate permission to present himself or herself for re-examination not sooner than four months after the first examination. The examination may be repeated only once, at the option of the department.

### **The Dissertation Prospectus**

The student is expected to work closely with the dissertation advisor to construct the prospectus. At the time of the prospectus defense, the fifth committee member must be from outside the department, and this committee becomes **the dissertation committee**. This outside committee member may also be added prior to the prospectus defense should the student choose to do so.

Since the department has several different kinds of expectations for a dissertation prospectus, the student should consult the advisor and committee members for details. Although each candidate's committee will have different expectations, a dissertation prospectus typically is a lengthy document that includes:

- an overview of the intellectual problem that situates it in relation to relevant conversations (i.e., historical, critical, methodological, political, or theoretical)
- a review of literature that synthesizes and evaluates prior work and that makes clear what is new about the proposed study
- a justification for the relevance and importance of this new proposed study
- a hypothesis or set of research questions that will guide the analysis
- a description of and rationale for research methods or critical approaches to be employed or arguments to be developed, and such apparently mundane things as a possible time table, travel to archives, availability of films or documents, applications for grants, etc.

- a draft table of contents that, in some cases, can include a paragraph or two exposition per chapter
- a preliminary bibliography

A committee meeting will be held to assess the significance of the proposed dissertation, the reasonableness of its scope and approach, and the student's methodological and substantive preparation to carry out the work. As a result of this meeting the committee may approve the dissertation prospectus, withhold approval subject to needed adjustments in scope, direction, or method, or reject the proposed project. While it is expected that the project will evolve from the prospectus through the completion of the dissertation, significant changes to the project can only be made upon the approval of the dissertation committee and the DEO.

Committee members must sign the "Approval of Prospectus" form by the end of the fourth year (if the student entered the doctoral program with a bachelor's degree) or by the end of the third year (if the student entered the doctoral program with a master's degree in communication or an equivalent body of work). This form is available on the department's website: <http://www.uiowa.edu/commstud/resources/>. After successful defense of the prospectus, the student must maintain continuous registration until the dissertation defense (see "Continuous Registration Policy").

### **The Dissertation**

Formal guidelines for the dissertation can be attained through the Graduate College. The dissertation advisor will be the principal critic and respondent to elements of the dissertation in progress. In addition, one member of the committee will be designated second reader by the advisor to provide additional feedback and an added perspective on the overall argument. A draft of the dissertation must be submitted at least to the advisor and second reader for their review and approval prior to preparation of the final draft for first deposit at the Graduate College and distribution to all dissertation committee members.

The final stage in the process is the oral defense. The main office submits, on your behalf, the "Request Form for Final Examination: Advanced Degree" including dissertation title and date of final exam (oral defense). This form should be submitted to the main office no later than three weeks prior to the defense. If there have been any changes in coursework since the Plan of Study Summary was submitted to the Graduate College, the "Application for Change in Plan of Study," form must also be submitted. This form is available on the department's website: <http://www.uiowa.edu/commstud/resources/>.

The student will sit for a final oral defense of the dissertation after completion of the courses on the plan of study document, with a grade-point average of at least 3.0 and submission of the dissertation in a form acceptable to members of the dissertation committee and Graduate College. A copy of the dissertation to be defended must be in the hands of each committee member at least two working weeks (weeks in which the University is in session) before the oral defense.

Dissertation defenses are open to the public and must adhere to the typical nine-month faculty teaching and service calendar. Members of the faculty of the Graduate College are especially invited to attend and, subject to the approval of the DEO, to participate in the examination.

Committee members must sign the “Report of Final Examination: Advanced Degree” within two days after the defense. This form is available on the department’s website:

<http://www.uiowa.edu/commstud/resources/>. The main office will submit this form to the Graduate College on the student’s behalf.

Upon completion of the dissertation and a successful defense, and after making necessary changes, the student will follow the University’s established deadlines to make the final deposit of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

The student will submit the “Official Checklist” document, make the first deposit and then the final deposit in the last semester of work. Graduate College deadlines can be found at <http://www.grad.uiowa.edu/deadlines>. If the student is unable to complete the graduate requirements after submitting the application for degree, contact the main office to submit a “Deletion Notice.” The student **must** complete and defend the dissertation within five years of passing the Doctoral Comprehensive Exam in order to satisfy Graduate College requirements. If a student does not meet that deadline then he or she will have to petition for re-instatement and possibly re-take the Comprehensive Exam.

### **Summary Timelines for Graduate Students**

These two timelines summarize the actions described above in “The Doctoral Program: Step-by-Step” section.

#### **For students entering the program with a Bachelor’s degree and with five years of funding support:**

- Year One:     Begin working with temporary advisor to formulate plan of study committee.
- Year Two:     Doctoral Committee formed no later than 3<sup>rd</sup> semester in residence  
  
                   Plan of Study defended in either the 3<sup>rd</sup> (normally) or 4<sup>th</sup> semester (by April 1<sup>st</sup> ).  
                   [Note: If POS is not approved, the student has until the end of the following semester to gain approval]
- Year Three:   Comprehensive Exam Committee formed and Pre-Comprehensive Exam Proposal approved by the end of the spring semester (6<sup>th</sup> semester of funding)
- Year Four:     Comprehensive oral exam no later than February 28<sup>th</sup> (8<sup>th</sup> semester of funding)  
  
                   Dissertation Committee formed and Dissertation Prospectus defended by the end of the spring semester (8<sup>th</sup> semester of funding)

Year Five: Dissertation defended by the end of the spring semester (10<sup>th</sup> semester of funding)

**For students entering the program with a Master's degree and with four years of funding support:**

Year One: Doctoral Committee formed no later than 2<sup>nd</sup> semester

Plan of Study defended normally by the end of the spring semester (2<sup>nd</sup> semester of funding) but no later than last day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester [Note: If POS is not approved, the student has until the end of the following semester to gain approval]

Year Two: Comprehensive Exam Committee formed and Pre-Comprehensive Exam Proposal approved by the end of the spring semester (4<sup>th</sup> semester of funding)

Year Three: Comprehensive oral exam no later than February 28<sup>th</sup> (6<sup>th</sup> semester of funding)

Dissertation Committee formed and Dissertation Prospectus defended by the end of the spring semester (6<sup>th</sup> semester of funding)

Year Four: Dissertation defended by the end of the spring semester (8<sup>th</sup> semester of funding)

### **Continuous Registration Policy**

Regardless of location of residence, all doctoral students must maintain continuous registration until the completion of their degree. All doctoral students are considered to be "under instruction" and are thus considered to be accessing University of Iowa faculty and staff time, and University facilities. Tuition is to be paid for such access. Doctoral students will be required to register for course work by their department and pay the appropriate tuition OR for the course "Doctoral Continuous Registration" (036:399:Advisor Instructor Code), and pay 2 s.h. tuition. This requirement applies to students conducting research, fieldwork or other scholarly activities related to their graduate programs of study including the writing of the thesis or dissertation and consultation with faculty, as well as students taking courses at the University.

Using a form available in the Graduate College, students may petition the Graduate College for the privilege of paying a special Post-Comprehensive Registration only when extenuating circumstances arise that require a temporary lapse in their academic program. Such circumstances could include, but are not limited to, medical or maternity leaves, personal or family situations, military obligations, etc. The Graduate College will consult with the student's department regarding the petition, prior to making a decision to grant or deny the petition for the special Post-Comprehensive Registration. Post-Comprehensive Registration is not to be used for final registration in a doctoral program.

When doctoral students plan to defend their dissertations, students will register for "Doctoral Final Registration." During this final registration, the student will be required to pay the 2 s.h. tuition. The final registration may be repeated if the degree requirements are not completed in this session.

## **Postponing Studies**

The department adheres to the Graduate College rules related to the postponement of studies. There are certain circumstances in which you can delay your registration or put things on hold. There are other circumstances in which you cannot hold back the clock. For example, after you have passed the Doctoral Comprehensive Exam, you have five years in which to make a successful defense of your dissertation, with no exceptions. If you do not meet that deadline then you will have to petition for re-instatement, which may or may not entail retaking your Doctoral Comprehensive Exam (and possibly also retaking at least some coursework) before you can submit a dissertation.

As noted in an earlier section, a graduate student may request up to one year's leave of absence for medical cause without loss of normal progress status. Reasons for leaves of absence other than medical will result in a failure to maintain normal progress. Failure to maintain normal progress jeopardizes the student's TA funding eligibility should he or she decide to return to the program at a later date.

## **Earning a Master's Degree "Along the Way"**

All students who have been admitted to the program enter as doctoral candidates, however, if a student entered with a bachelor's degree, he or she may wish to earn the master's degree "along the way." Interests can change, also, and a student may decide to leave the doctoral program with a terminal master's degree.

Master's degree students are required to complete a minimum of 30 semester hours towards their degree. For most such students there is a requirement that at least 24 of these hours be completed at an advanced level (over 200) and that at least 24 hours must be completed at Iowa. All M.A. students must successfully complete 36:200, Introduction to Research and Teaching, during the first semester as a graduate student at Iowa. Certain areas also require that courses are distributed in particular ways over specific topical areas of the subject matter and students must check that their plan of study document meets this requirement.

Doctoral students who do not already have in hand a master's degree in Communication Studies from another institution, and who would like to receive a master's degree, must complete the requirements for the master's degree. For students who elect the master's degree without thesis, two options are available for the master's comprehensive exam. Upon recommendation of the department, the doctoral comprehensive exam may be counted as the master's comprehensive exam. Alternatively, a doctoral student can take a four-hour, written master's comprehensive exam near the completion of the minimum 30 credit hours of coursework counted toward the master's degree. The master's comprehensive exam is not a duplicate of course examinations but seeks to examine the student on his or her ability to synthesize, integrate, and apply research and theory. The master's comprehensive exam committee is a three-person faculty committee selected by the student to reflect the pattern of coursework counted toward the master's degree. The examination is judged satisfactory or unsatisfactory with two unsatisfactory votes necessary for a committee judgment of unsatisfactory. The report of the master's comprehensive

examination is due in the Graduate College not later than 48 hours after the examination and by the deadline date established by the Graduate College. If the department so recommends, a candidate who fails the examination may present himself or herself for reexamination but not sooner than the following session. The examination may be repeated only once. [Note: The underlined portion is relevant to all students regardless of when they entered the program.]

### **Dismissal from the Doctoral Program**

All dismissal decisions for academic fraud or failure to meet good standing will first involve a hearing that includes all affected parties: the student, advisor, DGS, DEO, and GAC. The DEO will send one certified letter, or an equivalent formal notification recognized by the University of Iowa, informing the student of the hearing for dismissal, with a copy to the Graduate College. GAC will be responsible for conducting the hearing in a manner that ensures impartiality (avoiding conflict of interest), fairness (all sides must be heard), timeliness (within two weeks of receipt of the hearing to dismiss), and appropriate confidentiality. If these conditions cannot be met for all GAC members, then GAC will establish an ad hoc committee to conduct the hearing. If the student is dismissed from the program, a second certified letter (or an equivalent formal notification recognized by the University of Iowa) will be sent to the student communicating this decision. Should the student wish to appeal the final departmental decision to dismiss, the student can appeal to the Graduate College. [Note: This underlined dismissal policy applies to all doctoral students in the program regardless of the year they entered the program.]

### **Appeals**

All departmental regulations, including those in this handbook, may be appealed. The appeals procedure outlined in this paragraph concerns appeals other than those dealing with dismissal. The student must initiate an appeal in a timely fashion (at least a month before a decision must be made by the Graduate Appeals Committee, which is normally composed of the Graduate Affairs Committee or a subset of its members). The letter of appeal, detailing the extenuating circumstances, should be sent to the DEO. Normally, he or she will forward the appeal to the department's regular Graduate Appeals Committee for adjudication. The Committee will adjudicate the appeal within ten working days of its receipt, during fall and spring semesters. The student's academic advisor will participate in the Committee's deliberation but will not have a vote. After considering the recommendation of the student's committee (doctoral or dissertation), the extenuating circumstances, and other arguments provided by the student and the advisor, the Appeals Committee may (1) grant the appeal without qualification; (2) grant the appeal with appropriate conditions attached; (3) grant the appeal, but with renewal of assistantship or fellowship delayed until appropriate conditions are met; or (4) sustain the original decision called for by the regulation.

### **Ombudsperson**

The office of the Ombudsperson responds to questions or problems presented by any member of the University community – students, faculty, and staff. The Ombudsperson serves as a confidential, neutral, independent resource person who listens, provides information, advises, and sometimes mediates. All requests and consultations are treated in the strictest confidence.

Students should observe procedures outlined in the University document, “Policies & Regulations Affecting Students.” The appropriate academic advisor, department head, supervisor, DEO, dean or other administrator should normally be consulted before contacting the Ombudsperson. Where the use of official channels would mean lengthy and damaging delays or involve a lack of confidentiality and/or impartiality, it may be appropriate to consult the Ombudsperson early in the process.

The office of the Ombudsperson is located at C108 Seashore Hall, phone 335-3608, e-mail: [ombudsperson@uiowa.edu](mailto:ombudsperson@uiowa.edu). Office hours are 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. When possible, persons should call for an appointment, but written requests and drop-ins are welcome. Voice mail records messages left evenings and weekends or if the phones are busy. The home page of the Office of the Ombudsperson at the University of Iowa website is <http://www.uiowa.edu/~ombud/>.