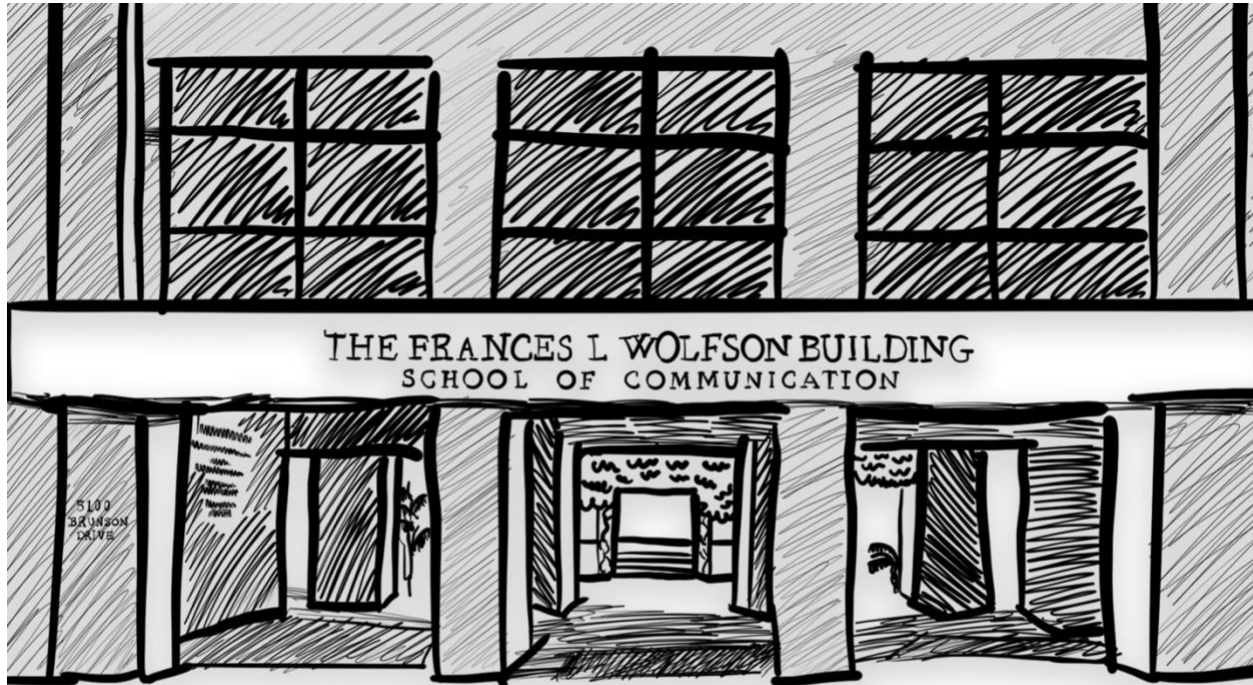


The University of Miami
School of Communication
Graduate Studies Handbook 2026-27



**What makes us *different*
makes you *exceptional*.**



UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
SCHOOL of
COMMUNICATION

Welcome Incoming and Continuing Graduate Students

At the University of Miami School of Communication, we see graduate education as a driver of real-world impact. Our mission is simple: to cultivate scholars, strategists, and storytellers who not only adapt to the evolving media environment but also lead it.

Here, you will find high-impact faculty research, cutting-edge facilities, and a global campus community positioned in one of the world's most dynamic media hubs.

On behalf of our faculty, staff, and community, I welcome you to Graduate Studies at the University of Miami School of Communication. We're thrilled to have you as part of our graduate family and look forward to helping you bring your vision to life.

— **Michelle I. Seelig, Ph.D.**

Associate Dean of Graduate Studies for the School of Communication

Professor, Interactive Media

University of Miami, School of Communication

Wolfson 4003

Coral Gables, FL 33146

(305) 284-5211

mseelig@miami.edu

Table of Contents

Welcome Message	2
Acknowledgment of Receipt	4
About the School of Communication	5
Handbook of Policies and Procedures	5
For all Graduate Students	6
During Your First Year (Preferably, First Term) of Study	7
Throughout Your Graduate Program	8
Registering for Courses	8
Academic Progress and Probation/Dismissal	10
Financial Information	14
Responsibilities of Graduate, Research, & Teaching Assistants	18
Adherence to Professional Standards	19
For Doctoral Students	19
Graduate Student Success Tips	28
Frequently Asked Questions	29
Other Important Information	31
Important Phone Numbers	35
School of Communication Contact Information	35

Acknowledgment of Receipt

PLEASE READ, SIGN AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE, AND RETURN TO socgrad@miami.edu

Please read this document carefully and sign where indicated below. The School of Communication requires this signed statement, and we will add it to your student file. You must submit it to the Office of Graduate Studies by the **third** week of your first semester, or your program may be interrupted.

As a graduate student of the University of Miami, I commit myself to upholding the Honor Code and promoting the values of honesty, responsibility, and integrity. You can download the Graduate Student **Honor Code** from the University of Miami Graduate School's website at: <https://www.grad.miami.edu/policies-and-forms/index.html>.

As a graduate student of the School of Communication (SoC), I _____, acknowledge that I have six or eight years from date of enrollment to complete my program of study as follows: six if I am enrolled in a master's degree program; eight if I am enrolled in a doctoral (Ph.D.) degree program. I must be enrolled continuously during the fall and spring terms until I complete my program of study. Additionally, I must be enrolled in the term in which I graduate from the University of Miami. I also recognize that the University of Miami [Academic Bulletin](#) contains the overall terms and conditions governing my program.

I have read the UM Graduate School Graduate Student Handbook and the Graduate Student Honor Code available at: <https://www.grad.miami.edu/policies-and-forms/index.html>.

I have read the SoC Handbook of Policies & Procedures for Graduate Students.

It is my responsibility to obtain and review the above-mentioned documents, as well as any departmental handbook(s), and to adhere to the guidelines therein.

It is my responsibility to complete a Master's Course Sequence Plan or Doctoral Program of Study (as appropriate) in consultation with my advisor and approved by my committee.

I am responsible for updating my contact information in CaneLink so the University and SoC can reach me in an emergency.



Student Signature: _____

UM ID: _____

Link: <https://forms.gle/AZbEC5S9AFowm3ps5>

About the School of Communication (SoC)

The study and practice of communication is foundational to every human endeavor and relevant to a variety of academic subjects and professional practices. This is particularly pertinent now, in our networked, global information environment of the 21st century. Studying communication in our School of Communication (SoC) offers a valuable path to essential, relevant expertise through rigorous coursework and inspiring experiences.

At the University of Miami School of Communication, we don't just study the future of media, interaction, and human connection, but we also create it. Situated at the dynamic crossroads of the Americas, UM SoC provides an unrivaled launchpad for scholars, storytellers, strategists, and innovators eager to make a significant impact in our interconnected, media-rich world.

<https://registrar.miami.edu/dates-and-deadlines/academic-calendars/index.html>

Handbook of Policies and Procedures

This handbook is for students seeking degrees in the School of Communication's doctoral and master's programs and is intended to provide important information to help you understand the policies and procedures set forth by the University of Miami, the Graduate School, the School of Communication, and your department. Students are expected to read this handbook, the UM Graduate Students [Honor Code](#), the UM [Academic Bulletin](#), the [Academic Calendar](#), the [Final Exam schedule](#), the UM [Graduate Student Handbook](#), and your Program or Department's own handbook, as appropriate.

Students should refer to their program guidelines and the [Academic Bulletin](#) for the year they entered the University of Miami School of Communication for more details about graduate studies, specific program requirements, and suggested plan of study. Graduate students are held accountable for this information, and no policy or procedure will be waived because a student pleads ignorance of a regulation or asserts that he/she was not informed by an advisor or other authority.

Your program of study is governed by the terms and conditions found in the UM [Academic Bulletin](#) for the term in which you begin that program. This Handbook interprets the [Academic Bulletin](#) in terms of the School of Communication's "way of doing things." Since it is updated annually, this Handbook refers to the year in which it appears. Its main purpose is to provide additional information and help you meet the conditions in the [Academic Bulletin](#). If there is ever any inconsistency or seeming conflict between the UM Bulletin and the School of Communication's Handbook, the Academic Bulletin is the governing document. **Note: The information in this handbook is valid at the time of publication but is subject to change.**

For all Graduate Students

Read the UM Graduate Student [Honor Code](#)

All new students must read the University of Miami Graduate Student Honor Code.

Sign and Return the “Acknowledgment of Receipt”

The “Acknowledgment of Receipt” is found on page 4 of this handbook. Read, sign, and return it to the Office of Graduate Studies at socgrad@miami.edu within the first semester of enrollment. A registration stop will be placed on future registration if it is not returned.

Review your Acceptance Letter

Prior to meeting with your advisor, double-check whether any conditions have been placed on your admission into your program. Bring your acceptance letter to this meeting so you and your advisor can review these conditions and clear up anything you do not understand. Contact the Office of Graduate Studies with any questions. ***A registration stop will be placed on future registration if you do not satisfy all admission conditions, including all required documents, within the allotted time.***

Meet with your Advisor

Initially, your department or program will recommend an Advisor. Your advisor will provide you with guidance on course enrollments and discuss your *program of study* as a doctoral student or *course sequence plan* as a master’s student. ***At the beginning of your program and prior to enrolling for courses in subsequent terms, you must meet with your Program Director or advisor before your advising hold is released.***

- For master’s students, the graduate program director will serve as your advisor for your program of study.
- For doctoral students, when you enter the program, you will be assigned a temporary faculty advisor whose research interests may or may not align with yours. Your advisor’s role is to assist you in choosing courses and in meeting faculty members relevant to your interests.
- Students may select a different faculty advisor whose research interests better align with theirs, with approval from the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. The Doctoral advisor will also chair your Supervisory Committee.

Immunization and Student Health Insurance Requirements

All graduate students enrolled in six credits or more must show proof of health insurance or purchase the university’s student health insurance. Students are also required to provide proof of immunization either by submitting their immunization records or by submitting a preprinted form signed by a doctor to the Student Health Service. Proof of immunization must be submitted prior to the first semester of enrollment, or a fee will be charged.

To access forms to waive health insurance or to document immunization, go to [Student Health Insurance](#). For more information about health insurance, contact the Student Health Service at 305-284-9100 or by email at studenthealth@miami.edu. Failure to comply with Student Health Service requirements may result in a registration stop. ***Note: More than any other issue we have encountered, graduate students' failure to provide proof of immunization has caused the most problems for entering graduate students.***

University of Miami - Title IX Notice of Nondiscrimination

The University of Miami does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX and its regulations, including in admission and employment.

Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to the University of Miami's Title IX Office, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both. The University of Miami's Title IX Coordinator information is as follows:

University's Title IX Office

Maria Sevilla, Title IX Coordinator

6200 San Amaro Drive, Ste. 230, Coral Gables, FL 33146 Telephone: 305-284-8624

Email: titleixcoordinator@miami.edu Website: <https://titleix.miami.edu/about/index.html>

The nondiscrimination policy and grievance procedures can be located at titleix.miami.edu, under the "Policies and Procedures" tab.

To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or make a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX, please contact the Title IX Coordinator or file an online report through <https://titleix.miami.edu>.

During Your First Year (Preferably, First Term) of Study

Academic Calendar

During your first semester, and each semester afterward, check the University of Miami [Academic Calendar](#) to ensure you meet all semester deadlines, such as late fees and drop/add dates.

View Your Doctoral Program of Study or Master's Course Sequence Plan

During your first semester, review your program of study or course sequence plan. Available on your respective program's [website](#).

Conditional Admission

Your admission letter outlines the academic conditions placed on your admission by the Office of Student Health Services or another University department. Please address all these conditions as soon as possible. Failure to take care of conditional-admission requirements within the time specified on your certificate of admission will result in a block being placed on your ability to register for courses. ***A registration stop will be placed on future registration if you do not satisfy all admission conditions within the allotted time.***

Throughout Your Graduate Program

Time to Completion

Doctoral students have eight (8) years from the start of their program to complete all degree requirements and graduate; master's students (M.A., M.S., M.F.A.) have six (6) years to complete degree requirements and graduate.

Continuous Enrollment

You must be registered ***continuously*** during the fall and spring terms from the time you begin until you complete your graduate degree program. Failure to do so requires that you be readmitted to the program.

If you have completed all coursework, you should enroll in your department's research in residence course. The continuous registration course for M.A. and M.S. students is COM 820; for M.F.A. students it is COM 825; and for doctoral students, it is COM 850. ***Note: The School of Communication does not provide a tuition waiver for continuous enrollment courses. Students must pay full tuition for these courses.***

Registering for Courses

You must register for courses through [CaneLink](#). Every term, an advisor hold is automatically placed on your ability to register. Your advisor will remove this hold after you review your course-enrollment plans each semester.

Dropping and Adding Courses

Graduate students can drop and add courses through CaneLink unless a hold has been placed on your ability to do so. If you have a hold, you must first complete what is required before you can register.

Under some conditions, students who drop courses after the final day to receive a 100% refund may find themselves owing more money than if they had completed the course; for example, if a student is supported by a federal training grant, the grant is reimbursed the full amount of its contribution before the student receives a refund.

In addition, if a student is receiving a tuition waiver from the School of Communication and they drop a course after the final day to receive a 100% refund, those course credits of the tuition waiver will be considered “spent.” For example, if a student drops a 3-credit course after the final day to receive a 100% refund, those 3 credits of the SoC-based tuition waiver have been used up. What is more, any retake of this course or an equivalent course will not be covered by the tuition waiver.

The School of Communication strongly recommends that you drop any courses you plan to drop in CaneLink by the University’s **final** date for receiving a 100% tuition refund. The Office of Student Accounts publishes a schedule of prorated refunds based on when a student drops a course. Visit the [Tuition Drop Credit Schedule](#) website for dates.

Retroactive Drop/Add Course Requests

The Office of the Registrar will not consider retroactive drop/add course requests unless an appeal is submitted to the Program Director with a compelling reason and appropriate documentation showing why the student could not drop/add a course in CaneLink before the set deadline(s).

Students requesting a retroactive drop/add case must provide their explanation, complete the drop/add form provided by the Office of Graduate Studies, and have the Program Director sign it. With a written letter of support from the Program Director, they will submit the retro request and all required documentation to the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies for approval before the case is sent to the Registrar’s Office for consideration.

Leave of Absence

You may request a [leave of absence](#) for medical, financial, personal, professional opportunity, or other appropriately documented reasons. Your request must be approved by your Advisor (i.e., Committee Chair), your Department Chair, the Associate Dean, and finally the UM Graduate School. Your time to completion may be extended by the amount of time that you are on leave. Typically, a leave of absence lasting more than one calendar year requires compelling justification and may entail approval of your program faculty. Under no circumstances are leaves that accumulate for more than two years granted.

Please request a [leave of absence](#) in sufficient time that approvals may be obtained prior to your taking it; leaves are not granted retroactively or after the fact. In a dire emergency, such as an unexpected severe family illness, approval for a leave of absence may be accelerated. There may be consequences to your taking a leave of absence, including requirements that you repay student loans. Please investigate these consequences before requesting leave.

Grades of Incomplete (I)

You may receive a grade of incomplete (I) for a course where you and the Professor agree that you require time beyond the term's end to finish the work. The Professor may give you up to one calendar year to complete that course. By Graduate School policy, if the "I" is not changed within one year, it remains on the graduate student's academic record and course credit can be earned only by repeating that course or an equivalent. Doctoral students must have all coursework completed *before* Qualifying Exams. ***Note: The School of Communication does not provide a tuition waiver for courses (or their equivalents) that must be retaken for whatever reason, including an "I" that has not been changed within a year. Students must pay tuition for these courses in full.***

Failed Course

Students must maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative grade point average in order to receive a graduate degree. Some programs require students to earn a grade higher than "C-" in core courses. Please check with your program and department for such requirements. For a detailed explanation of grade and credit hour requirements, check your specific Program and the [Academic Bulletin](#). ***Note: The School of Communication does not provide tuition waivers for courses (or their equivalents) that must be retaken for whatever reason, including an initial grade of "C-" (or lower, D or F) requiring that the course (or an equivalent) be retaken. Students must pay tuition for these courses in full.***

Grade Point Average (GPA)

Your cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) is based on all grades awarded while in your program of study at the University of Miami. The Graduate School and the School of Communication require that all graduate students maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or better.

If your GPA drops below 3.0, you will be placed on academic probation, and a hold will be placed on your ability to enroll in further coursework. If your GPA does not improve within a term, you may be dismissed from your program. If it improves but does not rise above 3.0, your probation may be extended for another term. If your GPA rises above 3.0, your probation will be lifted. ***Note: The University will not award a graduate degree to a student with a cumulative GPA below 3.0. If your GPA falls below 3.0 and improves very slowly, you may be asked to sign a statement acknowledging the University's 3.0 GPA policy and explicitly accepting the financial risk of continuing to enroll in courses without earning the grades needed to raise your cumulative GPA above 3.0.***

Academic Progress and Probation/Dismissal

Academic Probation

A graduate student may be placed on academic probation if the cumulative GPA drops below a 3.0 (the UM Graduate School's required GPA to graduate from the University of Miami) at the

end of either the fall or spring semester; or if the student fails a course; or if the student fails to behave according to the highest norms of professional ethics in the field of study; or for some other serious infraction.

In such cases, the Office of Graduate Studies sends probation letters to the student with copies to the Department Chair, Advisor, and Graduate School. The student is informed in the letter what the nature of the infraction is and given a specific time frame in which to remedy the problem or he/she is subject to dismissal. Typically, a student is given one semester to raise the GPA above 3.0.

While on probation, a hold is placed on the student's ability to register for additional courses. If a student remedies the infraction within the given time frame, the probation is lifted, and the hold is removed.

If a student fails to remedy the infraction within the prescribed time, but demonstrates significant progress, the Advisor, Department Chair, and Associate Dean review the case to determine whether the student should be dismissed or not. If the Advisor, Department Chair, and Associate Dean agree that the student should not be dismissed, the student is given another term to improve. The above process is repeated until the student is either dismissed or remedies the infraction.

A student on probation is very likely to lose his or her SoC-based tuition waiver and/or graduate student assistantship. ***Note: a student who shows no progress in remedying the reason for having been placed on probation or who incurs multiple probationary infractions will be dismissed.***

Graduate students must meet the standards for satisfactory academic progress established by the School of Communication, defined as:

1. maintaining a minimum 3.0 cumulative grade point average in order to receive a graduate degree
2. receiving a C or higher in each course
3. earning at least **67% of attempted credits**
4. demonstrating academic and scholarly integrity
5. making adequate progress toward completion of the thesis project or capstone, or dissertation, if applicable.
6. completing the degree within six years for the Master's degree and eight years for the Ph.D. In rare circumstances, the Dean of the Graduate School may grant exceptions to the time-to-completion policy at the request of the Graduate Program Director.

Students who have failed to meet any of the above standards will be placed on academic probation and notified in writing by the School of Communication Office of Graduate Studies. This notice includes the reason for probation, an outline of the actions necessary to remove the probation, and a specific timeframe to remedy the violation/s. The student must sign the letter

confirming receipt by the given deadline. If the letter is not signed by the deadline, the student will not be enrolled and will automatically default to discontinued status and be dismissed from the program, after which readmission cannot be guaranteed.

The student is given one semester to raise the GPA above 3.0 and/or remedy the breach of the standards listed above. If the student fails to meet the required standards within the given timeframe, they may be dismissed from the University.

The Program Director, Chair, and Associate Dean will review the case independently of the others' rank to determine whether the student has demonstrated significant progress in remedying the breach. Each will submit an independent written assessment of the student's case before a final decision is reached. If all agree, the student may be given another semester to improve. A student has only two attempts to repeat this process before the student is dismissed or the infractions are remedied and probation is lifted. No extension may be granted if it would push the student past the six- or eight-year limit toward completion of the degree.

A student on academic probation for two consecutive or nonconsecutive semesters who does not meet the standards for satisfactory academic progress listed above may be dismissed from the University.

Dismissal Appeal Process

Students wishing to file an appeal for dismissal should do so in writing as soon as possible, and no later than 10 days after receiving a dismissal notice from the School of Communication Office of Graduate Studies.

If a student wishes to appeal the final determination by the School of Communication, then the student has 30 days to submit a grievance review request letter to the Dean of the Graduate School. Students may opt to submit the appeal to the University Ombudsperson for a preliminary assessment.

Note that when initiating the appeal, the request letter should:

1. endeavor to be clear and concise;
2. describe the students' complaints and allegations;
3. identify the individuals or units against whom the grievance is being filed;
4. provide any evidence or relevant materials to be considered; and
5. state the specific relief sought.

Grade Appeal Process

Per the academic bulletin, the academic community is unanimous that the grade an instructor assigns to a student is the instructor's responsibility and privilege. Any effort to alter this would violate academic freedom.

The grounds for a grade appeal are:

- administrative or computational error in the calculation of a grade;
- the application of arbitrary or capricious grading standards that differed from those applied to other students in the course;
- the assignment of grades based on criteria beyond academic performance, including (but not limited to) violations of the University's Non-Discrimination policy; and
- substantial and unreasonable deviation from stated course requirements, policies, or grading criteria.

Students should appeal the grade in the following order:

- First, the faculty member or administrator responsible for the course, program, or activity.
- Second, the Graduate Program Director or Department Chair and/or administrative superior(s) of the faculty member or administrator.
- Third, the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies in the School of Communication.

The appeal process must be initiated as soon as possible and, in all events, before the completion of the next regular semester of the assignment of the grade resulting in appeal and *prior* to the completion of all degree requirements or withdrawal from the University.

Students must complete all internal SoC grade resolution and/or appeal steps outlined before appealing to the Graduate School. If a student wishes to appeal the final determination by the School of Communication, the student has 20 academic days to complete the Academic Action Appeal Form, Part A, and provide the required documents specified by the form, as well as any additional materials relevant to the appeal, to the Academic Ombudsperson, prior to being heard by the Graduate School. For more information, please refer to the [Academic Bulletin](#) (see "Graduate School Grievance Guidelines" and "FSSAC's Standard Academic Appeals Process (Grade Appeals)" sections).

Other Grievances

A student may file a grievance for other reasons, specified in the University of Miami Academic Bulletin, under Graduate Policies and Procedures: Academic Policies. Students wishing to file a grievance should do so in writing within 10 days of the alleged incident. They must prepare a written description of the grievance that is clear and concise, to be submitted in the following order:

- First, the Graduate Program Director
- Second, the Department Chair.
- Third, the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies in the School of Communication.

If, upon completing the above process, the issue is not yet resolved, the student has 30 academic days from the date of the final written determination of the Dean's delegate for the School of Communication to contact the Graduate School.

For additional information concerning graduate study, students are encouraged to consult the Graduate Student Handbook produced by the Graduate School at the University of Miami. This handbook is available on the [Graduate School's website](#). ***Note: In the event of any inconsistency with the Academic Bulletin in effect, please note that the Academic Bulletin trumps this document.***

Financial Information

Financial Assistance

Graduate students may qualify for and receive other types of financial assistance such as help with payment of books, fees, and other educational expenses; conference travel; additional tuition assistance; and (primarily doctoral) research assistance. Assistance is available through a range of outlets such as the Graduate Activity Fee Allocation Committee (GAFAC), an SoC graduate awards committee, and Department-level funds.

The Office of Student Financial Assistance and Employment administers federal, state, private, and University financial assistance programs. This office awards financial assistance for Graduate/Professional students and communicates with students primarily through the CaneLink system regarding information needed to complete the financial aid process.

For more information, please visit [Canes Central](#), call 305-284-IBIS, or visit the Canes Central office in person on the Coral Gables campus:
1307 Stanford Drive
Harold Long Jr. and H.T. Smith Student
Services Building 1st Floor
Coral Gables, FL 33146

Financial Assistance may be available through the SoC, a student's Department, and research projects, some of which are externally funded. Keep your advisor and Department Chair updated about your financial needs.

No awards of any kind (i.e., graduate student assistantships and/or tuition waivers) may be transferred. An award is provided to a recipient who may accept it and the conditions that are attached; or who may decline the award and its conditions.

SoC-Based Tuition Waivers

The School of Communication offers tuition waivers to Ph.D. students and a limited number of master's students. Admissions letters include these waivers for qualified students.

While receiving a tuition waiver, a graduate student is expected to:

- Maintain adequate and continuous progress in their program of study.

- Maintain a record that is largely free of grades of incomplete and/or that fall below the Graduate School's and program's minimum-grade requirements.
- Maintain a cumulative Grade Point Average that is at or above 3.0.
- Be continuously enrolled.

Tax Liability

Please note that SoC-based tuition waivers may carry potential tax liabilities under IRS rules and regulations. The student is responsible for all tax liabilities that come with these awards. Please consult with a qualified tax preparer or attorney. To learn more, please refer to IRS Publication 970 (Tax Benefits for Education) on the IRS website.

University of Miami Employee or a Spouse/Dependent

If you are a University of Miami benefits-eligible employee or a spouse/dependent of a University of Miami benefits-eligible employee, you must complete the Tuition Remission & Waiver Taxation Form for Graduate Courses. The University manages its tuition waiver plans in accordance with Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations. Tuition waivers are considered taxable income to university employees and are subject to federal income tax and FICA withholding in the calendar year the course is taken.

University of Miami employees who have questions on tuition remission must contact HR-Total Rewards, your pay and benefits team, by completing the online inquiry form or calling 305-284-3004.

Stipend-Based Graduate Student Assistantships (GSA)

Typically, Graduate Student Assistantships are limited to doctoral (Ph.D.) students and to a limited number of master's degree students who are enrolled in full-time study in the School of Communication. The purpose of a GSA is to provide assistance to a doctoral student while that student is pursuing doctoral study. Hence, a basic assumption of this assistance is that the recipient is engaged in developing her or his own research interests and conducting independent yet appropriately supervised research in addition to the responsibilities of the GSA. Please consult with your advisor and with your GSA supervisor on your own research interests and how they might interact synergistically with both your GSA appointment and your ongoing coursework.

The University of Miami classifies stipend-based Graduate Student Assistantships into four more-or- less distinct categories:

- Research Assistantship (RA), in which a graduate student works on research. Usually, an RA spends the bulk of their time working on a research project under the supervision of someone on faculty in the SoC;
- Teaching Assistantship (TA), in which a graduate student works on instructional activities. Usually, a TA spends the bulk of their time working on instructional activities such as supporting someone who is teaching a course or teaching a course

independently. Sometimes, a teaching assistantship might entail the student providing tutorial assistance to other students, usually undergraduates, within a structured setting;

- Traineeship, in which a graduate student is being trained (usually through an external grant) through graduate study for a specialized area;
- Graduate assistantship (GA), in which a graduate student provides assistance that does not fall under one of the above categories. For instance, a GA may spend the bulk of their time helping a Department or a Program prepare for an external accreditation review.

The School of Communication, through its Departments, Offices, and Research Projects, provides doctoral student assistance in the form of one or a combination of more than one of the above. Some research projects or other forms of assistance (e.g., University fellowship or federally funded traineeship) may provide a larger stipend, or they may provide a longer appointment. The Associate Dean of Graduate Studies will assign the specific assignment, supervisor, and other information. The Office of Graduate Studies may reassign students based on the School's needs.

Trainees and recipients of other forms of federal support are expected to comply with the conditions of their award as outlined by the funding agency. If you are offered such an award, please consult with the project director to be sure that you understand the additional conditions that you agree to. The University of Miami cannot (and will not seek to) countermand those award conditions.

Graduate student assistantships of all forms are limited to full-time doctoral students (where full-time is defined in the UM [Academic Bulletin](#)) who are on campus and who are within the first five years of their program of study.

Tax Liability for Graduate Student Assistantship Appointment and Fellowships

Please note that the U.S. Tax Reform Act of 1986 has declared fellowships to be taxable income, as they exceed the amounts you pay in tuition, fees, books, supplies, and equipment required for courses of instruction. The University does not withhold Federal taxes from fellowships, so students must make personal arrangements with the Internal Revenue Service. In addition, stipend awards may be subject to FICA withholding tax.

Graduate students often have questions about the tax implications of their financial or employment status as Graduate Assistants (GAs), Research Assistants (RAs), Teaching Assistants (TAs), or as recipients of tuition waivers, fellowships, or scholarships. Please refer to IRS Publication 970 (Tax Benefits for Education) on the IRS website and/or your personal tax advisor. Plan ahead. We encourage you to explore this concern prior to tax season. Visit <https://www.irs.gov/publications/p970> to learn more.

Compensatory Awards: Compensated work includes most graduate-student-assistantship (GSA) awards since recipients are paid (i.e., compensated) for their work. The University withholds income, Social Security, and other taxes from your monthly stipend and forwards those monies to the Federal Government.

Non-compensatory Award: Awards that are not based on pay-for-work are non-compensatory. Certain kinds of fellowships and travel allowances are non-compensatory awards. If you are a non-resident foreign person receiving a non-compensatory award, fellowship, or stipend, these funds may be subject to income tax withholding to the extent that the award is more than qualified educational expenses. If a non-resident foreign person's earnings are subject to tax withholding, that withholding will be charged quarterly (September, December, March, and June) via [CaneLink](#). For a copy of IRS Form 1042, please contact the Office of Student Accounts. Also, for the annual withholding tax return for U.S. Source Income of Foreign Persons, visit: <https://www.irs.gov/forms-pubs/about-form-1042>

If you are a "US person" (a federal term that includes U.S. citizens and residents) receiving a non-compensatory award, fellowship, or stipend, this award may be subject to taxes. The amount of the award that is more than qualified educational expenses will be reported to the IRS annually, on or about March 15th.

Qualified educational expenses include tuition, books, mandatory fees, and other costs required to attain a degree.

Please consult with a qualified tax preparer or attorney.

Additional Employment

Graduate Student Assistants may work additional hours outside of their GSA awards provided that:

- this work does not conflict with the GSA assignment (i.e., your GSA assignment comes first);
- the student's program of study does not suffer;
- this additional work does not conflict with the terms of the GSA (some training grants do not allow outside employment); and
- this additional work is approved by the student's work supervisor, committee Chair, Department Chair, and/or Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies.

IRS and University of Miami Requirements

Graduate Student Assistantships are governed by IRS and other federal rules and policies. To ensure you follow them and are paid regularly and on time, students must onboard with the Program Manager in the SoC Office of Graduate Students by the end of the first full week of August. Graduate Assistants must also be fully and financially registered when payroll is run, or FICA will be deducted from their paychecks and is not refundable. Therefore, all registration should be completed before the start of each term.

To learn more, please refer to [IRS Publication 970](#) (Tax Benefits for Education) on the IRS website and/or your personal tax advisor.

Responsibilities of Graduate, Research, & Teaching Assistants

Graduate Assistants: Graduate students (GAs) assigned to work with a faculty member will complete a Mentorship Agreement form with their assigned faculty supervisor.

Research Assistants

In addition to the General GSA requirements, you will be assigned research responsibilities by your supervisor and/or the project director for the project you are working on. Research Assistants will be evaluated each semester by the designated faculty supervisor.

If your assignment entails human subjects research, you should plan on taking the CITI course before engaging in any research activities. The UM Graduate School and the SoC require that all doctoral-student research be reviewed by, and approved by, a University of Miami Institutional Review Board (IRB). Before engaging in any human-subjects research, all University of Miami faculty, staff, and students must complete an online course known as the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI). To take this course, you need to set up an account at the website: www.citiprogram.org.

Graduate Student Teaching

Teaching broadly includes all activities in which a faculty member works to instill knowledge, improve skills, or foster attitudes and dispositions in students. Therefore, teaching includes not only classroom instruction but may also include field supervision and visitations, various forms of individualized instruction, student advising and counseling, and developing and refining courses, programs, and curricula.

Graduate student teaching is a fundamental aspect of professional preparation. Graduate students should have formal training and practical experience to compete successfully for faculty positions and to meet the challenges of those positions with skill. The faculty encourages students to seek a range of teaching experiences but considers satisfactory progress toward the degree the principal criterion for approving requests for advanced pedagogical experience (e.g., teaching beyond the 100-level, co-teaching, or mentor teaching with a faculty advisor, etc.).

Teaching Assistants

Teaching assistants who are teaching must give students the opportunity to meet with them privately during posted office hours (at least three hours per week). Coordinate this schedule with the department chair. To inform students enrolled in your course, list your office hours on the syllabus.

Teaching assistants should use their SoC's standard course syllabus and adhere to the University's policies involving the [Honor Code](#), student access to accommodations, and the administration and grading of exams. Please be reminded that all classes you are scheduled to teach, including final exams, will be conducted **in person**. This means students are expected to attend classes on campus and *not* remotely, even after Thanksgiving Break. You may not change the modality of your class unless approved by the Department Chair for your assigned class and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies to ensure there is no violation of academic policies.

Teaching assistants are required to use the standard faculty evaluation form, which has been approved to evaluate all courses taught in the School of Communication. Retain grades and class records for five years. When a TA completes a teaching assistantship, they should transfer these records to the department chair.

Graduate students' teaching is evaluated each semester by the Department in the SoC where they teach. The evaluation includes a review of course materials and at least one classroom visit and observation during the semester. Evaluations of TA performance should be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies each semester.

Adherence to Professional Standards

Competent performance in research, teaching, or other graduate student activities cannot be separated from appropriate professional conduct. All graduate students should conduct themselves in accordance with established ethical standards in their disciplines or fields, and in accordance with generally recognized standards of the academic profession, such as those found in the Statement of Professional Ethics promulgated by the American Association of University Professors. Research assistants (RAs) may not date or have any type of romantic relationship with research subjects. Teaching assistants (TAs) and Graduate Assistants (GAs) may not date or have any romantic relationship with a student in the TA's class or in the class a GA is assigned to work with a faculty member. Whether serving as a research assistant (RA), teaching assistant (TA), or graduate assistant (GA), graduate students are expected to dress appropriately (e.g., no crop tops, shorts, tank tops, see-through clothing) for their academic and professional settings.

For Doctoral Students

Initially, the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies will assign a temporary faculty advisor whose research interests may or may not align with yours. Your advisor's role is to assist you in choosing courses and in meeting faculty members relevant to your interests. Students may select a different faculty advisor whose research interests align better with theirs, with approval from the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. The Doctoral advisor will also chair your Supervisory Committee.

Your advisor will provide guidance on course enrollments and will help you craft an initial program of study that fits within your department's guidelines and promotes your professional growth and research interests. View the [Academic Bulletin](#) to see a sample plan of study for your program.

As you progress through your doctoral program, and before completion of your Qualifying Examinations, you will need to select a member of the Graduate Faculty to serve as your mentor. This individual will also chair your committees (Supervisory/Dissertation).

Your advisor may be the person who was initially assigned to that role; it may be someone you came to study with; it may be someone else within your field of specialization.

Please do not underestimate the importance of your choice of Advisor. Your Advisor is probably the single most important person whom you will meet and work with during your entire program. Your advisor's guidance and your ability to work productively with this individual will help to determine the quality of your doctoral research and the kind of post-doctoral career that you can aspire to.

During coursework, at seminars, or even during casual conversations, you should ask yourself if someone you encounter shares your research interests or does work that you could find interesting. If you are working on a research project, you should pursue the ideas that define that project and think about the kind of research you might do; discuss your interests with the project director to see if you might be able to pursue your own interests as part of the project's work. Feel free to volunteer to participate in research working groups that you might not be formally affiliated with to better understand whether the project director and you have compatible interests and whether this person might become your advisor.

When you think you are ready to select your own advisor, make an appointment to discuss your research interests with that individual. If the two of you come to an agreement, please inform the Office of Graduate Studies.

According to the UM [Academic Bulletin](#) and [Graduate Student Handbook](#), your advisor must be a member of your Program's graduate faculty.

A good Advisor commits to:

- Helping you to form the rest of your committee subject to the approval of your Program Director and Department Chair;
- Advising you on fulfilling your program requirements, including a one-on-one meeting during each course-enrollment period to ensure that you are making adequate progress and enroll in appropriate coursework;
- Scheduling meetings of your committee;
- Discussing and constructively critiquing your research from ideas through

implementation and manuscript development, conference presentation, and submission for publication;

- Mentoring you as appropriate for someone entering your professional specialty; and,
- Helping you find an appropriate position once you have been awarded your doctorate.

Though a doctoral student has great flexibility in the selection of an Advisor, no graduate student may change advisor during critical points in the program: while qualifying and/or qualifying exams are being administered and read; once a proposal hearing has been scheduled; or once the final defense of the doctoral thesis has been scheduled.

Supervisory Committee

Please refer to the [Academic Bulletin](#) and [Graduate Student Handbook](#) for a description of the Supervisory Committee's make-up and its responsibilities. As a rule of thumb, your supervisory committee is the committee that sees you through your qualifying examinations.

Qualifying Examination

Please refer to the UM [Academic Bulletin](#) and [Graduate Student Handbook](#) for a basic introduction to the Qualifying Examination. A qualifying examination shall be taken after a student has fulfilled the School of Communication's requirement for full-time study and when the student and Supervisory Committee deem appropriate. Doctoral students must complete their required courses the semester before taking their qualifying examinations. In addition, the School of Communication requires that the student maintain a 3.0 grade point average in all graduate-program courses taken prior to the qualifying examination.

Please consult with your advisor regarding the content and format that comprise qualifying examinations; prerequisite and/or co-requisite requirements (such as, but not limited to, the completion of research work course); the settings in which an examination may be administered; scoring procedures; the inclusion of an oral component at the sole discretion of the Supervisory Committee; conditions governing the rewriting of questions or assigned papers; and the point at which a final score is awarded.

The Supervisory Committee, through its Chair (i.e., the student's advisor), shall notify the SoC Office of Graduate Studies of the final disposition of a student's qualifying examination. The Supervisory Committee Chair should provide the SoC Office of Graduate Studies with an electronic copy of the student's qualifying examination. Typically, a student who fails the qualifying examination is dismissed from the program.

AFTER THE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

Dissertation Committee

Please review the UM [Academic Bulletin](#) and the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) section

entitled “The Supervisory and Dissertation Committees.” After successfully completing the Qualifying Examination, a doctoral student should identify a member of the graduate faculty who is willing to serve as the dissertation chair (please read the section on the importance of your faculty advisor, above). The chair and the student then select a dissertation committee based on the student’s thesis topic and the relevance of the committee members to that topic.

In selecting a dissertation topic, the student and (advisor) doctoral dissertation chair should ensure that:

- the topic is important to the academic discipline;
- the topic is “researchable,” meaning that:
 - it is reasonable to expect that a relationship exists between independent and dependent variables (for quantitative studies);
 - logical and appropriate research questions or hypotheses can be developed and/or;
 - an appropriate research design can be employed to address the research questions/ hypotheses.
- the research can be conducted with appropriate human subjects’ protections and can be completed within a reasonable period; and
- faculty in and/or outside the SoC who are knowledgeable about the topic are able and willing to serve on the dissertation committee.

In addition to selecting a dissertation topic, the student advisor (Dissertation Chair) should:

- work with the student to develop a timeline for completion of the dissertation;
- suggest strategies for overcoming hurdles in completing the dissertation in a timely fashion;
- ensure that the student is Citi-Certified;
- ensure that the study is submitted to the appropriate Institutional Review Board and agency research-review board (if there is one);
- closely supervise a student’s progress in the satisfactory completion of both the proposal and dissertation and, with agreement of the dissertation committee members, have the student confer with members on an “as needed” basis if problems arise that would benefit from the member(s) expertise; and
- have the student revise drafts of both the proposal and the dissertation until it is the best document that these two parties can create, and only then allow the student to circulate the dissertation to the committee prior to the proposal meeting and the final defense for feedback. [The purpose of this final point is to avoid wasting professors’ time by having multiple professors correcting the same mistakes in drafts.]

Please note: Because the Advisor is the PI of record for a student’s dissertation research, the University’s Institutional Review Board requires that the Advisor also be CITI-certified.

When choosing committee members, the student and advisor should clearly understand each member's role. If the student and chair disagree on member selection, the chair holds the final decision authority.

Please ensure that the dissertation committee meets the Graduate School's guidelines, which can be found in the [Academic Bulletin](#). A department or program may require additional members with qualifications beyond those listed by the Graduate School; the Graduate School's requirements represent a minimum.

In addition, the School of Communication requires that:

- the committee shall have at least one member with expertise in quantitative or qualitative research, as appropriate;
- the committee members shall have terminal degrees and expertise to contribute to the content of the dissertation.
- One committee member must come from an outside department or outside the SoC; with the prior approval of the Department and Graduate School, faculty from other accredited universities may be eligible for committee membership (vitae are required).

Please review the UM Academic Bulletin and the Graduate Student Handbook for the duties of the Dissertation Committee. The student (with the advisor's assistance) should discuss the proposed dissertation topic with potential dissertation committee members and ask them to serve on the dissertation committee. In addition, members of the Committee should:

- consult with and advise the student throughout the entire dissertation process;
- approve the dissertation proposal (if a proposal is required by the student's Department);
- meet at intervals, review progress and provide feedback to the student;
- read and comment upon drafts of the dissertation proposal and the final dissertation, to determine its defensibility, and approve the scheduling of the oral defense;
- conduct the final oral examination to ensure that the dissertation is of sufficient quality and meets the expectations of the professional community;
- scrutinize the proposal and dissertation in a timely fashion to appropriately consult with and advise the student;
- inform the dissertation chair at least 5 workdays prior to a scheduled meeting if one believes the student is not ready to present the proposal or to defend the completed dissertation, and to suggest that the meeting be postponed; and
- regardless of circumstances, approve the thesis only if the completed document meets the most rigorous expectations of the professional community.

If a member of the doctoral dissertation committee must be replaced, the student shall identify a possible replacement and request approval from the dissertation committee chair. The student then asks the replacement member if s/he is willing to serve. If the replacement member is willing, the dissertation chair shall recommend the replacement member to the department chair, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, and UM Graduate School.

The Dean of the UM Graduate School has final approval over the make-up of a student's Dissertation Committee.

Admission to Doctoral Candidacy

Please review the UM Academic Bulletin and the Graduate Student Handbook section entitled "Admission to Candidacy." When the Dissertation Committee (including its chair) and student have reviewed the student's Program of Study and have determined that the student has successfully completed all of the Graduate School's and the program's requirements for Admission to Candidacy, they should complete the Application for [Admission to Doctoral Candidacy Dynamic Form](#).

The Dean of the Graduate School has final approval over an Application for Candidacy. A completed and fully approved Application for Admission to Doctoral Candidacy should be submitted to the Graduate School through a Dynamic Form by the end of the term in which a student passes her or his qualifying examination. If there are any changes to the doctoral committee after this form is submitted and processed, the Committee Composition Change Request Form, available on the [Forms page of the Graduate School website](#), must be submitted.

When the student has met all requirements and passed the qualifying examinations, they may apply for admission to candidacy. The student must be admitted to candidacy before the dissertation defense is scheduled. ***Please note: No student may receive the degree in the same semester or summer session in which he or she is admitted to candidacy.***

YOUR DISSERTATION

Dissertation Proposal

Please meet with your advisor to determine your department's or program's expectations for a proposal. If your program requires a formal, written proposal, the advisor should provide the Office of Graduate Studies with an approved SoC Approval of Dissertation Proposal form, with an electronic copy of the student's approved proposal.

IRB Approval

No research involving human subjects may be undertaken without prior review and approval by one of the University of Miami's Institutional Review Boards. After you have been given the go-ahead on your study and if your study involves human subjects research, please submit it for approval through the University's IRB. System login is at: <https://www.research.miami.edu/>

If you are unsure whether your research involves human subjects, please discuss this with an analyst at the University's Human Subjects Research Office (HSRO) at 305-284-3195. If the

analyst determines that your study does not involve human subjects research, ask for written confirmation and forward a copy to the Office of Graduate Studies for inclusion in your files.

Once the proposal has been finalized and approved by the IRB, the student conducts the proposed research under the supervision of the chair (the Principal Investigator on the IRB protocol) and may also meet with committee members during the research process as necessary to report progress and to obtain advice. If a problem necessitates any change in the originally approved research procedures, such problems must be reported to the entire dissertation committee. Any changes in research procedures must be approved by the students' committee and by the IRB, by submitting an amendment to the original protocol. If the proposed change in procedures is approved, a revised copy of the originally approved proposal with highlighted changes must be disseminated to all committee members and to the Office of Graduate Studies.

A copy of the then-current IRB approval letter must accompany the abstract that is submitted when scheduling the dissertation defense. The committee may not allow a dissertation defense to be scheduled without documentation that the study has been reviewed, approved, and conducted under the ongoing supervision of the University of Miami IRB.

The Dissertation Document and Abstract

The student's dissertation should follow the APA style guide and conform to the [Graduate School's ETD formatting guidelines](#).

The student submits carefully edited drafts of the various chapters of the dissertation (as per chair and/or committee request) to the advisor and meets with members of the committee to discuss the draft, as directed by the dissertation chair.

A draft of the dissertation should be provided to committee members at least two weeks prior to each committee meeting, as appropriate. Additional committee meetings may be requested by either the student or committee members. At some point, the student should make all changes required by the dissertation committee and prepare a final draft for the defense.

The student should prepare an abstract of the dissertation according to the requirements of the Graduate School. The student must obtain approval of the abstract from the dissertation committee.

With the approval of the dissertation committee, the student schedules an oral defense of the dissertation. At least 2 weeks prior to the oral defense, the student must submit the [Defense Notice](#) form to the Graduate School. It is the student's responsibility to meet all the [Electronic Theses and Dissertations \(ETD\)](#) requirements and to ensure that an examination room is reserved for a two-hour time block. Committee members must have at least two weeks to read the document. Students should be aware that the first date for a defense is tentative since the defense could be canceled based on any committee member's evaluation of the defensibility

of the dissertation. Any time prior to the defense, a member who is unwilling or unable to work with the committee and/or the student may be replaced at the discretion of the Association Dean for Graduate Studies and the committee chair.

Dissertation Defense

The purpose of the doctoral defense is to provide a scholarly forum in which the student is queried about the research methods, findings, and implications. Interested faculty and current students are encouraged to attend and follow the established guidelines.

It is the student's responsibility to procure and make available all necessary forms that require committee signatures. These include forms provided by the UM Graduate School, the Office of Graduate Studies, and the student's Department.

The defense committee is the same as the dissertation committee. Any changes in the defense committee must be approved by the committee chair, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, and the UM Graduate School through the [Committee Composition Change Request](#) Dynamic form. The entire committee is required to attend the defense. In cases of emergency in which a member cannot attend the defense, the Associate Dean will appoint a substitute.

Committee members are expected to be at the defense at least five minutes before the designated time. Questioning shall begin when all members of the committee are present.

If a quorum is not present within fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled starting time, the matter shall be immediately reported to the Associate Dean or designee to determine the best course of action; e.g., delay the hearing, substitute a committee member, or postpone the defense.

The committee chair shall determine the order in which members will question the candidate. Members may ask out-of-turn questions for clarification. Only faculty members and current students may attend. Students wishing to attend must have the permission of the chair of the dissertation committee and the student.

Before the questioning, the student may be asked to give an overview of the study, including procedures and the dissertation findings. The candidate may bring resource materials and audiovisual aids to help answer questions or present the overview. Any committee member may request to review these materials.

During the defense, the student should show that they have achieved the goals outlined in the dissertation proposal in a scholarly way, demonstrate a working knowledge of the research methods used, connect the research to the broader discipline, and acknowledge any limitations or flaws in the study's design or execution. They should also discuss how these issues might influence the conclusions. The defense is not a social event. Therefore, serving food is inappropriate.

Deliberations

Following the defense presentation and questions, all people except the committee members will be excused from the room.

The deliberations provide committee members with the opportunity to express any concerns about the integrity or quality of the dissertation, and the candidate's oral presentation of the research and responses to the committee's questions.

If a committee member desires some clarification of a point, the candidate may be called back to the room for that purpose.

- During the deliberations, the committee must decide on one of the following:
 - successfully defended the dissertation;
 - passed the defense, but some revisions of the written document are needed;
 - failed the defense, but extenuating circumstances permit the student to have a second and final opportunity for a defense; or
 - failed.

If the committee agrees that the student has passed this defense but needs to make revisions in the document, the committee should develop a list of revisions for the advisor to share with the student. Committee member(s) who are given post-defense supervisory responsibilities shall withhold signature(s) until necessary revisions are made. All revisions must be submitted by the end of the following academic semester, or a new defense may be required.

Committee decisions should be by consensus. If agreement cannot be achieved, then a vote of the majority shall be sufficient to decide.

The Committee should fill out the SACS Assessment Form for theses and dissertations and give it to the Chair. The Committee Chair should submit these forms to the Office of Graduate Studies, which will add them to the student's graduation file.

Following the deliberations, the candidate will be asked to return to the room where the chair will announce the decision, including any necessary revisions. Committee members should remain while the decision is given by the chair to be sure that the list of suggested revisions, if any, is complete, clear and accurate. A list of revisions should be communicated in writing (e-mail) to the student by the committee chair with copies to the rest of the committee.

At such a point as the candidate has successfully defended his/her dissertation, the committee shall sign the following three forms required to complete every thesis or dissertation submitted to the Graduate School: the [Certificate of Defense Approval](#) form, [ETD Final Content Approval](#) form, and [ETD Availability Agreement](#) form. Each form must be signed by all required signees and received by the Graduate School before the student will be given permission to upload the final PDF in the Scholarly Repository.

Before submitting a final draft, the student should contact the Graduate School Sr. Editor at grad.dissertation@miami.edu for predefense formatting review and other pertinent Graduate School regulations.

Forms, Links, Guides

Visit the [SoC's website](#) for additional forms, links, and guides.

Graduate Student Success Tips

Faculty and students have contributed some thoughts on how to make the most of your graduate experience:

- The first year can be overwhelming. Concentrate on your courses.
- In consultation with your advisor and professors, plan to attend most lectures, talks, workshops, and presentations hosted by the School of Communication and your program, as these are essential to your professional development.
- If you have questions in your courses, ask.
- Seek out peer review from your student colleagues. You are an excellent resource for one another.
- Keep your long-term thesis project or capstone, or dissertation goals in mind as you explore new concepts, regions, theories, technologies, and methodological approaches. You are here to expand and deepen your projects.
- Seek advice from your peers, advisors, professors, and the School of Communication.
- Familiarize yourself with library resources as soon as possible.
- If you do not hear back from an advisor or faculty member after three days, follow up.
- Good writing takes years to develop. Aim to communicate clearly and succinctly. Seek feedback from student colleagues and faculty before submitting your work.
- Consider your best seminar papers as drafts for conference presentations, published articles, and creative works for festivals, screenings, or exhibitions.
- Doctoral students, after your first year at UM (and earlier, if your faculty advisors approve), should aim to present one to two conference papers and publish one peer-reviewed article per year.
- Critique is an essential part of academic life. Listen to constructive criticism, discuss it with your advisors, revise your work accordingly, and **do not give up**.
- Your professional success will be determined by what you do in and outside of class, including research, presentation, publication, conferences, festivals, screenings, exhibitions, and networking, all of which are essential skills.
- Take some time to rest mentally and physically every week.
- To teach is to learn. To be a university professor is to be a lifelong student.
- Be timely in completing program requirements. Keep your long-term goals in mind.
- Communicate clearly, honestly, and frequently with your advisor and committee members. They are your most important advocates on campus.

What Works:

- active participation in a research project involving hypothesis building and testing, data collection methods and analysis, and write-up;
- consistent hard work throughout the program;
- understanding that the completion of the dissertation is quality-dependent, not time-dependent;
- regular meetings with the chair, keeping committee members informed, and chapter-by-chapter approval by the chair;
- careful scrutiny of the proposal to avoid problems later during final stages;
- a “dissertation partner” for peer mentoring and support;
- reading the Graduate School Guidelines for Dissertations.

What Doesn't Work:

- changing committee members late in the process;
- having proposal meetings or defenses before being ready;
- not having rigorous expectations at the proposal and subsequent meetings;
- expecting professors to do the work rather than helping with problems;
- choosing a topic for ease of completion rather than interest in the topic.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if I ...

... need to change my advisors?

Sometimes things do not work out between a student and their advisor. If more than one person can serve as an advisor in your program, make an appointment with the person you would like to switch to. If you come to a mutual agreement, both of you should fill out and sign a Change of Advisor Form.

... need to request accommodations?

The University of Miami and the School of Education and Human Development comply with the American with Disabilities Act. If you require accommodations in your program of study or coursework, you should take proper documentation to the [UM Office of Disability Services at the Camner Center for Academic Resources](#). Once a formal accommodation finding has been issued, please send a letter to each of your course instructors and advisor to ensure receipt of appropriate support and accommodations during your program.

... need help in mediating a disagreement with a course instructor?

Typically, a student should first discuss concerns with the course instructor of record. Before scheduling an appointment with the instructor, make notes on what you think the issues are and what a successful outcome would look like. When you meet, try to see both sides of the matter and remain as factual as possible.

If you do not feel that you can discuss matters with the instructor or if you wish to appeal a decision, you should discuss matters with your academic advisor. The University has a well-defined chain of appeals. If something cannot be resolved at the Department level, it should go to the SoC grievance process. ***NOTE: Course grades are the instructor's sole responsibility. The only conditions under which a grade can be successfully challenged are if a mistake was made in how it was computed, or if the instructor failed to follow their grading policy.***

... need to be absent from a course?

Inform your instructor of your upcoming absence and provide a reason. Whether a planned absence can be excused depends on the severity of the reason and the instructor's attendance policy, so check the syllabus for the specific class.

The University of Miami and the Graduate School have policies governing when an absence qualifies as excused. In some cases, excessive absences, even if excused, may cause a student to miss critical coursework that cannot be made up, especially in discussion-based courses. In such a case, the course-attendance policy governs whether an absence may be excused.

In case of a medical or other emergency, you (or a friend or family member) should inform your course instructors as soon as reasonably possible. Once you return to campus, you should provide appropriate documentation either to your course instructors or to the Office of Disability Services (if you wish to maintain confidentiality about a medical condition) and set about catching up on missed coursework. If you were absent due to severe medical reasons, your instructor or the University may require you to provide a doctor's release stating that you are well enough to return to campus.

... need a leave of absence from my program?

Students can take up to a year's leave for life challenges or unexpected opportunities, which may extend their program time, especially in cases like medical leave. More than a year's leave is possible under exceptional circumstances but cannot exceed two years total. All leaves require approval from the advisor, Department Chair, Associate Dean, and Graduate School.

...fail to maintain continuous enrollment?

You will need to apply for [Readmission to the Graduate School](#).

...cannot register?

You should speak with your advisor. If your inability to register cannot be resolved by them, it is possible that a HOLD has been placed [on your ability to register. Students can view their holds in their](#) Canes Central Student Center.

Other Important Information

Cane Cards

All students, faculty, and staff can acquire Cane I.D. cards at the Cane Card Office located at 5807 Ponce de Leon Blvd, McKnight Building, 1st floor from 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday–Friday, (305) 284-3096.

Lost or stolen cards should be reported to the I.D. office at 305-284-3096 during the week. Lost or stolen cards may also be reported to security 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 305-284-6666. The card will immediately be deactivated to prevent it from being used by unauthorized people. Lost or stolen cards will be replaced for a fee. Damaged cards may be replaced for free upon presentation of the original card.

Class Meetings in Bad Weather

The University of Miami holds classes unless the University announces otherwise. Typically, the University sends a combination of e-mail, text, and/or recorded messages announcing campus closings and/or other significant events to students, staff, and faculty using contact information provided through CaneLink. For this reason, please keep your contact information up to date.

If you have any doubt about whether classes are meeting, please call the UM Emergency Information Hotline at 1-800-227-0354. Information about campus closings also appears on the [University of Miami Emergency Preparedness](#) website.

Cane Link

[CaneLink](#) is a Web-based interface that allows students to access official University of Miami information at any time, from any computer or device on the Internet. Students can use CaneLink to do a wide range of activities, including:

- Register for open classes
- Check final class grades
- Update personal information such as address, e-mail account, and phone number
- Check financial status
- View student evaluations of faculty members
- Handle parking tickets
- Enter final grades if teaching a course

For tips on using [CaneLink](#) functions, visit the [Student FAQs](#) webpage.

You can access CaneLink at canelink.miami.edu. Follow the instructions. When finished, please be sure to log out properly and to close your web browser. Failing to do so could allow someone else to access personal information without your knowledge. To log out, click on the “Log Out” button at the top of every page.

UM Academic Bulletin

The University's [Academic Bulletin](#) (specifically, the Graduate School's section of the Bulletin) contains information important to graduate students. You may access the Bulletin through bulletin.miami.edu.

Students are responsible for the information contained in the [Academic Bulletin](#) and are encouraged to download and keep a copy from the year they were admitted to graduate study.

Graduate Student Association (GSA)

[Graduate Student Association](#) is the student government organization representing graduate students at the University of Miami. Established in 1969, the GSA is one of the oldest graduate student governments in the United States. The primary function of the GSA is to provide the means for responsible and effective graduate student participation in the planning and conduct of university affairs. The GSA serves as a liaison between graduate students, individually and collectively, the faculty and the administration. In addition, the GSA exists as a social and intellectual forum to support and improve the quality of the graduate student environment at the University of Miami. The GSA office is located in the Whitten University Center #2300C. Additional information can be found at um-gsa.org.

Health Insurance and Immunization

Graduate students enrolled in six credits or more must show proof of health insurance or purchase the university's student health insurance. Students are also required to provide proof of [immunization](#) by either submitting their immunization records or submitting a preprinted form signed by a doctor to the health center. Forms to waive health insurance or to document immunization are available at the [Student Health Service](#). For further information about health insurance or immunization requirements, please follow the online links. Failure to comply with health center requirements may result in a registration stop.

Payroll

Graduate assistants are paid on the last day of each month. For questions about deductions, exemptions, or other concerns about payroll records, please contact the Graduate Business Office at 305-284-8702.

Policy on Academic and Non-academic Matters

Please refer to the Graduate School [Honor Code](#).

Policy on Consensual, Amorous, Romantic or Sexual Relationships

Consensual amorous, romantic or sexual relationships between members of the University community where one of the parties has academic, administrative or evaluative authority over the other may create or be perceived as creating a conflict of interest that undermines the objectivity of evaluation. The University of Miami has issued a Policy Statement covering such

relationships to faculty and staff. Students who have the need to discuss this policy may contact [Workplace Equity and Inclusion](#) at 305-284-3064.

Policy on Drug-Free School

As required by the Federal Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989, the University of Miami hereby notifies you that on university premises or at university-sponsored activities, the following acts are prohibited:

1. distribution, possession, or use of any illegal drug or controlled substance without legal authorization;
2. providing alcoholic beverages to individuals under 21 years of age, or possession of alcoholic beverages by individuals under 21 years of age; or
3. illegal possession of an open container of an alcoholic beverage, public intoxication, driving while intoxicated, and drinking alcoholic beverages in an unlicensed public place.

In addition to disciplinary sanctions under university procedures, including suspension or separation from the University for such acts, students or employees may face prosecution and imprisonment under Federal and Florida laws that make such acts felony and misdemeanor crimes.

The [Sandler Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Education](#) is located on the Coral Gables campus in Whitten University Center #2250, telephone 305-284-6120. It is a comprehensive Prevention, Intervention, Education and Referral Program focusing on alcohol and other drug use, misuse, and dependency.

Policy on Instructional Modifications for Students with Disabilities

Any UM student, graduate or undergraduate, with a disability should seek assistance from the Camner Center for Academic Resources, located on the second floor of the Student Services Building, disabilityservices@miami.edu. The Office of Disability Services website is: <https://camnercenter.miami.edu/disability-services/index.html>.

Once the Camner Center for Academic Resources has documented a disability, students are strongly encouraged to discuss the need for reasonable accommodation with their instructors during the first week of classes. Students with documented disabilities receive a letter from the Camner Center for Academic Resources to present to all instructors describing the nature of the classroom accommodations. Instructors are required to consult with their Department Chair before making any accommodations for disabled students.

Policy on Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of the University of Miami to maintain the campus as a place of work and study for faculty, staff, and students free of sexual harassment. Students should be aware that sexual harassment is unacceptable conduct and will not be tolerated.

Examples of such unacceptable behavior include but are not limited to:

- Sexually oriented verbal joking or abuse
- Subtle pressure for sexual activity
- Physical contact such as patting, pinching, or constant brushing against another's body.
- Demands for sexual favors, with or without implied or overt promises of preferential treatment or threats
- Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment

Students who wish to discuss sexual harassment should contact [Workplace Equity and Inclusion](#) at 305-284-3064.

Sexual Assault Response Team ([SART](#)). is a telephone response line for University of Miami students administered by the University's Counseling Center. During the regular academic year, students who have been sexually battered, assaulted, or molested can talk to a trained volunteer anonymously and from the privacy of a telephone. The S.A.R.T. hotline number is 305-798-6666.

Policy on Smoking

The University of Miami is a smoke-free environment. No smoking is allowed anywhere on the campus.

Recency of Credit

Graduate credits that are older than six years at the start of a student's program may not be transferred into that program.

Refunds and Late Fees

Students are responsible for observing all registration deadlines listed in the [Academic Calendars](#). All refunds for dropped classes are prorated according to the [University's schedule](#). A late fee will be charged in accordance with the academic calendar deadlines. The University may charge other fees for any canceled course(s) or for a student's failure to be financially registered.

Safety and Emergency Procedures

More than 100 emergency telephones are located throughout the Coral Gables campus. These phones are marked by a blue light to aid in nighttime identification. Phones connect directly to UM Police and identify the caller's location if the caller is unable to speak. Phones may be used to request a [security escort](#), report suspicious persons or activities, or to obtain information. You can also reach UM Police and Public Safety at 305-284-6666.

Confidentiality

All information about students, faculty, and staff must be kept in strict confidence. Federal law requires confidentiality in both research and teaching. Information regarding a research subject

and/or student cannot be given to another party (including a parent or spouse) without the written consent of that individual.

Important Phone Numbers

- Emergency Services
- Emergency Police, Fire and Rescue – 911
- Campus Police – 305-284-6666
- Campus Police Quick Dial – *711
- Crime Prevention – 305-284-1105
- Emergency Information Hotline – 1-800-227-0354
- Security Escorts at Coral Gables Campus – 305-710-7991
- Sexual Assault Response Team Hotline (SART) – 305-798-6666

School of Communication Contact Information

School of Communication website: <https://com.miami.edu/>

School of Communication Address: 5100 Brunson Drive, Coral Gables, FL 33146

Interim Dean for the School of Communication: TBD

Vice Dean for Academic Affairs: Dr. Alyse Lancaster, Wolfson, 2038, alancaster@miami.edu

Associate Dean for Graduate Studies: Dr. Michelle Seelig, Wolfson 4003, mseelig@miami.edu

Graduate Studies Program Manager: Tracey McSwiney-Kallaher, Wolfson 4025, tracey@miami.edu

Department of Cinematic Arts

- Department Chair: Dr. Al Martin, Wolfson 4018, almartin@miami.edu
- Sr. Program Coordinator: Christina Aja, Wolfson 4024, christina.aja@miami.edu
- M.F.A. in Motion Pictures Program Director: Professor Rafal Sokolowski, Wolfson 4017, rxs1973@miami.edu
- M.F.A. in Documentary Program Director: Professor Sanjeev Chatterjee, Communication International Building 5051-H, sanjeev@miami.edu

Department of Interactive Media

- Department Chair: Professor Kim Grinfeder, Communication International Building, 1054-D, grinfeder@miami.edu
- Sr. Program Coordinator: Vivian Orellana, Communication International Building, 1054-01, vxo46@miami.edu
- M.F. A. in Creative Technologies & Interactive Arts: Program Director: Professor Lorena Lopez, Communication International Building, 1051B, llopez@miami.edu, and while she is out, Professor Kim Grinfeder, grinfeder@miami.edu
- M.S. in Experience & Information Design Program Director: Dr. Barbara Millet, Communication International Building, 5051-G, bmillet@miami.edu

Department of Communication Studies

- Department Chair: Dr. Ronald Jackson, Communication International Building, 5051-H, ron.jackson@miami.edu
- Sr. Program Coordinator: Marcia Sierra, Wolfson 3028, msierra@miami.edu
- M.A. in Communication Studies Program Director: Professor Nicholas Carcioppolo, Wolfson 3013, n.carcioppolo@miami.edu

Department of Journalism and Media Management

- Department Chair and Co-Program Director: M.A. in Journalism: Dr. Sallie Hughes, Wolfson 2007, shughes@miami.edu
- Associate Chair and Co-Program Director: M.A. in Journalism: Professor Trevor Green, Wolfson 2049, trevorgreen@miami.edu
- Sr. Program Coordinator: Alessandra Pastori, Wolfson 2025, akp198@miami.edu
- M.A. in Communication for Global Social Change Program Director: Communication International Building, Dr. Jyotika Ramaprasad, Communication International Building, 5051-C, jyotika@miami.edu
- M.S. in Media Management Program Director: Dr. Michel Dupagne, Communication International Building, 5051-E, dupagnem@miami.edu

Department of Strategic Communication

- Department Chair: Dr. Sunny Tsai, Wolfson 3004, wanhhsiu@miami.edu
- Sr. Program Coordinator: Carolyn Lopez, Wolfson 3003, c.castro5@miami.edu
- M.A. in Advertising Program Director: Professor Monica Duran, Communication International Building 1053-C, msd36@miami.edu
- M. A. in Public Relations Program Director: Dr. Weiting Tao, Wolfson 3010, weiting.tao@miami.edu

Ph.D. in Communication Director

- Program Director: Dr. Michelle Seelig, Wolfson 4003, mseelig@miami.edu