

Welcome

Welcome to the School of Communication and the Arts' doctoral program. You are about to embark on a life-changing journey. The time spent at Regent will stretch you, test your limits and hopefully mold you into a Christian leader who will provide godly solutions to many of the challenges facing our society today. This year, 2011, was a year that brought our total number of doctoral program graduates to 172 since the inception of the program in 1991. The majority of those graduates are in the teaching profession where God can use their highly developed communication skills to impact the next generation of men and women. Scripture tells us in 2 Timothy 2:2 "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." Our mission is to develop scholars who are able to integrate a Christian worldview within their chosen profession in communication and to prepare our graduates to contribute to communication research, writing and scholarship.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 History of the Doctoral Program in the School of Communication and the Arts

Our doctoral program began in the fall term of 1991. SACS granted the doctoral program its full accreditation in the spring of 1993. At the same time, the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) also fully accredited the program. The distance track was granted full accreditation in July 1997. The doctoral program in the School of Communication and the Arts awarded its first Ph.D. degree during the May 1993 commencement.

1.2 School Mission and Philosophy

The School seeks to provide graduate education for aspiring servant leaders desiring to integrate their Christian faith with their communication skills, creative abilities and knowledge of communication and the arts. Our vision is to manifest the presence of Christ through the inspired communication of our faculty, students and alumni. We seek to empower Christians with a strong voice in society through both print and electronic media, through creative and artistic works and through media professionalism, teaching and academic scholarship.

2.0 General Program Information

2.1 Purpose of the Program

The Ph.D. degree is designed to prepare and enhance those persons working in the following areas: teaching, research, and administration. The program will also serve the needs of doctoral students seeking a career in any of these three areas.

2.2 Graduate Program Model & Philosophy

The graduate programs in communication studies are designed after the Oxford Teaching Method, founded at Oxford University. The adaptation of the Oxford Method in the School of Communication and the Arts has three basic components: on-line course work and on-campus course work, special lectures by faculty, and regular meetings with faculty. The program is designed to facilitate learning for both on-campus and off-campus students. Each doctoral student has a Masters or Doctoral Advisor who serves as the student's mentor and academic advisor. In addition to giving academic guidance, the advisor is also

available for more informal advice about administrative, financial or personal matters of concern.

The three traditional components of the Oxford Method are Formal Coursework, Special Lectures, and Discussion Forums. In addition we have added a fourth component for the doctoral students: Teaching and Research Teams. Each doctoral student will be part of a teaching team or a research team.

2.3 Doctoral Level Writing Style

The doctoral program permits the current edition of three defined professional writing styles: The American Psychological Association Style (APA) and the Modern Language Association Style (MLA). Doctoral faculty have the right to require either of these style forms for work submitted in their respective courses and for dissertations which they chair. It is the responsibility of the doctoral student to know thoroughly the stylebook required by his/her faculty and dissertation topic.

2.4 Requirements for the Doctoral Degree Program

STUDENTS MUST:

- **Complete a minimum of 44 hours of coursework prior to register for the qualifying examination.** Students work with an appointed faculty advisor who assists them in their academic discipline and helps them develop and complete their degree plan of studies. (See Approved Doctoral Degree Program form in Appendix D.)
- **Maintain a 3.0 minimum Grade Point Average** calculable every semester to remain in the program.
- **Interact** at least once each academic term with their advisor to assess their progress and plan their future academic career with emphasis on the dissertation area, topic and title.
- **Fulfill residency requirement.** The residency requirement for all doctoral students begins with a three (3) credit hour on-campus course, Introduction to Doctoral Studies in Communication (COM 700). On-campus students must complete two (2) consecutive, full time semesters of study on the Virginia Beach campus. Distance students must complete one seminar with an on-campus component each summer semester until all coursework is complete. (See Section 3.2).
- **Attend all scheduled colloquia and present at a minimum of one colloquium or an equivalent approved experience.** The judgment for **candidacy** includes colloquia attendance and presentations.
- **Pass the qualifying examination.** Upon completion of the qualifying examination and the vote of the doctoral faculty committee and School faculty, students become candidates for the Doctor of Philosophy in Communication degree.
- **Choose a doctoral dissertation committee** consisting of at least three faculty members and an outside reader to guide the dissertation work.
- **Complete the dissertation and pass a final oral defense of the document.**

The doctoral program must be completed within seven (7) years. The seven-year period begins with the semester of acceptance/enrollment into the program. See Section 3.4.

2.5 Doctoral Faculty Committee

The principal governing body of the doctoral program is the doctoral faculty committee. Under the leadership of the Chair of Communication Studies, the doctoral faculty committee consists of Ph.D. faculty members. The 2011-2012 committee consists of Dr. William F. Brown, Dr. Benson Fraser, Dr. Jack Keeler, Dr. Norman Mintle and Dr. Marc Newman. Diane Clark serves as the Doctoral and Faculty Services Administrator. She maintains records for masters and doctoral students.

2.6 Student Advisor/Mentor

The following outlines the Doctoral Student Advisor/Mentor program:

- With the letter of acceptance into the doctoral program, each new student is assigned a faculty advisor/mentor from the doctoral faculty of the School.
- Advisors/mentors are assigned on the basis of the student's stated study interest area and the availability of doctoral faculty members.
- Students are free to petition for a change in advisor or the composition of their qualifying examination committee at any time by using the Advisor Change Request form (See Appendix D) except when a student is in the process of his/her qualifying examination.
- At the completion of coursework, all students with the assistance of their faculty advisor will be assigned two additional faculty members to serve on their qualifying examination committee. The student's qualifying examination committee must be approved by the doctoral faculty committee and is dependent on the availability of each faculty member. This committee collectively oversees the examination, writes the qualifying examination questions and hears the oral defense.
- The student's examination committee and advisor automatically dissolve with the completion of the qualifying examination. This committee is replaced with the student's dissertation committee (see section 7.2 Doctoral Dissertation Committee).
- Students, both on-campus and distance, should avail themselves of the counsel and encouragement of their respective advisors. The responsibility and need for such interactions rests primarily with the students.

Forms Available: Change of Advisor Form

3.0 Program Policies

3.1 Approved Doctoral Degree Plan

Each student must develop and formally submit to his/her advisor, an approved doctoral degree plan. The doctoral degree plan form lists all mandatory classes, master's level courses, independent studies and required doctoral seminars, prerequisite courses, and/or supporting courses required by the student's doctoral advisor.

Form Available:

Approved Doctoral Degree Plan Form or
www.regent.edu/acad/schcom/phd/DgrPrgCm.html

3.2 Program Residency, Degree Completion and Full Time Student Status.

All doctoral programs require, under SACS compliance directive, a residency component. Residency is defined as a necessary component to building academic fellowship, a community of scholars and camaraderie towards the successful completion of a Ph.D. degree program.

Both on-campus and distance students have an initial residency course requirement, Introduction to Doctoral Studies in Communication (COM 700). All students must receive a final grade of a B to continue in the doctoral program.

Additionally on-campus track students have a residency requirement of two consecutive, semesters of study on-campus. An on-campus doctoral student is defined as taking six (6) credit hours or two (3 credit hour) courses per semester. The ideal of doctoral study is to devote all one's efforts to doctoral level study and research.

Distance students must undertake a minimum of one three-credit doctoral level course at Regent University each summer until coursework is completed.

Full-time status for doctoral students is defined as six (6) hours or two (2) courses per academic semester (excluding summer semester). Any semester registration less than six semester hours or two courses is defined as **less-than-full time. Regardless of full-time or less than full-time status, the student is required to be registered continually each fall and spring semester to remain active in the program.**

3.3 Residency after Completed Coursework

Doctoral students, having completed all required coursework (minimum of 44 semester credit hours) during any academic year, will not have to meet a summer residency requirement following that year of coursework. Students will be held to a minimum of two on-campus residency periods, the initial summer course (COM 700) and the summer following the first academic year of coursework. If required coursework spills over into a third (or more) academic year, participation in another summer seminar will be required.

3.4 Length of Program

Length of the program is defined by doctoral program policy. Length of the program means the deadline by which every student must complete all Ph.D. requirements for completion of the degree. The deadline for completing the doctoral program is **seven (7)** full consecutive calendar years from the semester the student initially enrolls in the program. This deadline

includes all academic semesters as well as all leaves of absence. The Ph.D. degree work is considered complete when the dissertation is successfully defended, the dissertation manuscript is signed by the members of the dissertation committee, and all University degree clearance procedures are satisfied.

3.5 Leave of Absence

A leave of absence is defined as any academic term for which a student yet to take the qualifying examination does not register for classes.

A leave of absence is one academic semester. The student should file a leave of absence petition in writing, explaining the reasons for the leave and submit it to the Doctoral Services Administrator (Diane Clark). Copies will be disseminated to the doctoral faculty committee and the Associate Dean for Academics for approval.

The maximum allowable number of leaves of absence is two semesters. Beyond the allowable two terms leave of absence, the student is automatically deemed inactive. To return to an active status in the program, the student must competitively reapply for admission to the program according to the yearly February 1st application deadline.

PLEASE NOTE: The doctoral program permits a maximum two semesters leave of absence before students reach the qualifying examination stage. **The policy does not permit any leave of absence after candidacy status (ABD) is reached.**

Students with scholarships and fellowships forfeit financial awards for the term(s) during which a leave of absence is taken. Additionally, students are not eligible for other financial awards available (e.g., convention travel, per diem expenses, etc.), and must return any already received award(s) for the leave of absence term. During a leave of absence, students may not apply for nor take qualifying examinations.

Candidates are required to remain registered for three (3) continuing dissertation credits (COM 799) for each academic semester (except summer semester) during candidacy and one (1) continuing dissertation credit each semester after a successful dissertation defense until the dissertation manuscript is signed off by the dissertation committee and submitted to the library for binding. Failure to do so will result in an inactive status. This means that the student has not maintained the required continued registration in the University to be a student/graduate in good standing for University privileges, for transcript requests and/or for the awarding of a diploma.

4.0 Doctoral Coursework Phase

4.1 Credit Hours

The doctoral program requires a **minimum** of 44 graduate semester hours of coursework prior to achieving candidacy. **This does not include required continuing dissertation credits after the student achieves candidacy.** The doctoral faculty committee may also require additional hours be included in the student's proposed degree plan. Students themselves may wish to take additional hours in light of their career plans. Additional hours required are subject to review by the doctoral faculty committee.

4.2 Prerequisite Hours

At the time of admission, enrollment in prerequisite courses in addition to the minimum number of hours may be required. These prerequisite hours will be based on a deficiency in an applicant's academic history, e.g., no master's degree in Communication or an academic weakness in the chosen area of study. Any prerequisite hours required are not included in the minimum of 44 hours of coursework required by the program.

4.3 Grade and Grade Point Requirements

Students are expected to maintain a B grade average or 3.0 GPA calculable every semester to remain in the program. When a student's cumulative GPA falls below a 3.00, the student shall be placed on academic probation for the next semester of enrollment. The student is granted only one probationary semester. Failure to attain a 3.00 cumulative GPA at the end of the probationary semester results in dismissal from the program (University academic policy). The student on academic probation should consult with his/her advisor to improve his/her academic performance. Academic probation status is recorded in the student's academic record. When a student is placed on probation the Associate Dean for Academics shall notify the student in writing of any specific instruction for improving academic performance. A student will be removed from academic probation when the cumulative GPA is 3.00 or above. In other words, the student has one semester to bring the low GPA back to the acceptable 3.00. If a student is dismissed, he/she will be notified in writing by the Associate Dean for Academics.

4.4 Classes Registration

Course schedules offered each academic term are made available by the Registrar over the Internet at (www.genisys.regent.edu/) or from the School's sitemap: http://www.regent.edu/acad/schcom/students/class_schedules.cfm

Prior to registering for courses each semester, all doctoral students are expected to confer with their assigned advisor/mentor to discuss their progress in the program and particular courses that would fit their individual degree programs.

In registering for courses, "MAT" represents a course taken on-campus; "MAD" for the same course represents the distance version of the course. Hybrid courses are designated by the term HYB on the current course schedule. Those hybrid courses are for on-campus and off-campus students who will access their course information on line and take part in online discussion forums. In addition, on-campus special lectures and discussion forums will be provided by faculty and will be open to all graduate students.

4.5 Taking Classes by Distance

The following are recommended technical requirements for taking courses via distance learning:

Internet Service Provider: All courses offered by distance use Blackboard software. Students taking courses by distance must be connected to the Internet by a reliable Internet Service Provider (ISP).

e-Mail Accounts: All Regent students receive a free email account for the duration of their studies. This account is web enabled and can be accessed worldwide from any computer connected to the Internet. The Regent account has the capacity of 10MB and is the primary email address required for all distance education. **All official communication from Regent**

University to the student is through the Regent email system. Students should check their email on a regular basis and also delete old messages. Regent email is available through Mail which can be accessed on the main Regent homepage under Quicklinks.

Computer Hardware: Regent's IT department has developed guidelines for minimum system requirements as well as suggestions for computer purchasing. Resource links for computer requirements and special purchasing options:www.regent.edu/it/standards

Computer Software: All distance learners should use the latest version of MS Windows and the latest version of Microsoft Office Suite. Many software vendors offer educational discounts on software. Minimum requirement: WIN NT and Office 2007. We also suggest using MS Internet Explorer as the primary web browser. Regent University computer labs and academic departments are PC based. Resource link for discounted software purchases:
www.journeyed.com/

4.6 Distance Education Registration, Tuition Payment and Textbook Sales

Registration. Registration for all students is conducted on line through GENISYS, the administrative database system. The doctoral and faculty services administrator in the School of Communication and the Arts is available to answer any question the student may have and to facilitate enrollment in non-web enabled courses.

Tuition Payment. The following methods of payment are available to on-campus as well as distance students:

Payment Method 1: Full payment by check or money order or credit card. The check or money order form of payment implies mailing. This should be done within five business days after registering to avoid delays or dropped registration. Credit card payment may be done on-line through GENISYS or at the Business Office site:
<https://secure.regent.edu/payments/>.

Payment Method 2: Tuition Installment Plan with a checking account (TIP). This method allows the student to pay four installments from a personal checking account. A \$60 processing fee is added to the choice of this method. The student must complete a TIP application form, include the first payment by check and attach a canceled check to the application form before this method can be used. A new form must be submitted each semester in order to authorize the University to request payment from your bank. The first check must be written for one quarter of the entire tuition amount due including the processing fee. Each of the other three installments will be withdrawn at the first of each of the next three successive months.

Payment Method 3: Employer Reimbursement. If a student's employer will be reimbursing educational costs, a copy of the employer's reimbursement policy must be on file in the office of the Associate Dean for Academics. The student should be prepared to pay any balance remaining from employer reimbursement amount at the beginning of the semester. The balance of the semester's charges will be billed to the student's credit card one week after the official end of the semester. The University will not submit official grades if full payment is declined by the credit card. This method is available only with the use of a credit card and adds a \$45 processing fee to the total semester's expense.

If the credit card company declines the credit charge, Regent University maintains the right to revoke the employer reimbursement option.

The Regent University Registrar's Office and Business Office will provide documentation of a student's grade and tuition/course fees to assist with reimbursement. This service is available upon request to Celia Seagraves (celisea@regent.edu) after grades have been processed by the Registrar's Office at the end of each semester.

Textbook Sales. The textbooks required for every course are listed either on the syllabus provided in class, found on the Web at http://www.regent.edu/acad/schcom/students/class_schedules.cfm, or Blackboard, at <http://regent.blackboard.edu>. All listed required textbooks are available from the University bookstore for on-campus students. Distance students may order books directly from the Regent bookstore at www.regentbookstore.net.

4.7 Transfer Credit

Students admitted into the program may petition the doctoral faculty committee to consider previously awarded graduate credit towards their new Ph.D. degree program. Credits applicable must be graduate hours taken at an accredited graduate institution, **hours over and above any previously completed degree**. The allowance of transfer credit and actual amount of credit transferred is the decision of the doctoral faculty committee with the approval of the Associate Dean for Academics. School policy and procedures allow a maximum of 20% of required coursework or 9 semester hours to be transferred. Requests for a transfer of credit for coursework taken prior to admission into the doctoral program are normally made at the time of initial enrollment. The doctoral faculty committee will weigh the student's transcripts, course descriptions or course syllabi from the granting institution, and applicability to the doctoral studies program in allowing transfer credit towards the Ph.D. degree. Courses being transferred have to be reported on the Transfer Credit Evaluation, and an official transcript must be requested and sent to the Registrar's Office. Although the university allows a maximum of 49% of a degree plan to be transferred in, this is at the discretion of the individual schools and is by no means a guarantee the full amount of hours will be approved for transfer. **Transfer of credit is not a right but a consideration.**

Form Available:

**Approved Doctoral Degree Program Form
Transfer Credit Evaluation**

4.8 Mandatory Classes

All formal courses in communication studies are taught through an online teaching system with opportunities for interactivity through both mediated and face-to-face communication. Both on-campus and off-campus students will access their courses online and take part in online discussion forums. In addition, on-campus special lectures and discussion forums will be provided by faculty and will be open to all graduate students.

Requirements: All students in the program are required to take 9 mandatory courses as part of their program of study.

Three courses focus on research methodologies commonly used in the field of communication.

- **COM 701: Communication Research: Historical/Critical Methodologies (3)** An in-depth survey, analysis and practice of current humanities and arts research approaches and methodologies used in the study of communication and the arts.
- **COM 702: Communication Research-Quantitative Methodologies (3)** Advanced study of classic and contemporary social science research methodologies and statistics utilized in the study of communication. Students must have previously had a graduate level social science methods course at another institution, COM 601 or another equivalent experience.
- **COM 703: Communication Research-Qualitative Methodologies (3)** Advanced study of ethnography, focus group interview techniques, participant observation, in-depth personal interview and other methodologies currently employed in the communication field.

In addition, all students are required to take the following courses:

- **UNIV LIB: University Library Resource and Information (no credit; fee only)** This is an on-line, self-paced tutorial to library research and information resources. Students will learn how to use databases and search engines relevant to their studies at Regent University. Must be completed first full semester of coursework.
- **COM 700: Introduction to Doctoral Studies (3)** An overview of the historical roots, methodological grounding and present state of and trends in the communication field with particular attention to its specialized vocabulary, important writers and works, and significant scholarly journals.
- **COM 705: Advanced Communication Theory (3)** An inter-disciplinary examination of the most current theories, scholarship, published research, and trends and issues in all areas within the communication and the arts field.
- **COM 707: Philosophy and Communication (3)** Broad, yet intensive study of the philosophical underpinnings of the communication and arts fields. The history of ideas, comparative worldviews, ethical issues, and other philosophical concerns will be addressed from a Judeo-Christian perspective.
- **COM 708: History of Communication (3)** Historical and interdisciplinary analysis of the development of communication and arts theories, concepts and practices from the oral tradition to the present.
- **COM 709: Theology and Communication (3)** Theological analysis and evaluation of the purposes and practices of communication.

4.9 Teaching and Research Teams

Each doctoral student will have the opportunity to join a teaching or research team led by a faculty member. Students on teaching teams will be directly involved in teaching activities and students on research teams will be directly involved in academic research. Student may receive from 1-3 credit hours of academic credit for this requirement by enrolling in COM 791 (Doctoral Mentoring: Pedagogy) or COM 792 (Doctoral Mentoring: Research & Writing) each semester. Students may receive up to 6 cr/hrs total of any combination of COM 791 or COM 792 in their degree plan. These two courses are listed below.

COM 791 Doctoral Mentoring: Pedagogy (1-3) Doctoral students work closely with one or more faculty members as part of a teaching team. Teaching assignments may include assisting faculty members with courses or overseeing undergraduate courses under the mentorship of a faculty member. Mentoring topics include teaching pedagogy, classroom dynamics, and on-line teaching skills. May be repeated for up to a maximum of 6 credit hours with approval from a doctoral advisor.

COM 792 Doctoral Mentoring: Research & Writing (1-3) Doctoral students work closely with one or more faculty members as part of a research and writing team. Course assignments may include conducting original research in collaboration with a faculty member or assisting faculty members with their research and writing projects. Mentoring topics include research planning, design and analysis from the historical-critical, qualitative or quantitative research traditions, and academic writing. May be repeated for up to a maximum of 6 credit hours with approval from a doctoral advisor.

4.10 Independent Study

The Independent study (COM 790) is designed to provide opportunity for students to pursue specialized areas of research and to be advised by faculty on a one-to-one basis. Students may apply no more than six (6) credit hours of independent study to their degree program. Credit hours are variable (1-3 credit hours per independent study) and are graded on the standard grade mode. Independent study registration is completed through the Doctoral Faculty Services Administrator by submission of completed and approved independent study forms.

The content of an independent study depends on the academic strengths of the faculty and the academic needs of the student. Independent study proposals require defined face-to-face meeting times for on-campus students; independent study proposals require clearly defined interactions for distance students.

Forms Available:
Independent Study Proposal/Approval Form
Independent Study Syllabus Form

4.11 Seminar (COM 685/785)

Students are required to take a **minimum** of two special topic seminars during the course of their study. The student's faculty advisor determines the maximum number of doctoral seminar credit hours that may be added to a student's program. Distance students should be aware that all seminars are not required to be offered on-line.

4.12 Master's Degree Program Course

Students may enroll in regularly offered master's degree program courses with approval from their faculty advisor. Normally, they must be in the student's expressed major field of interest. Students must insure that the particular courses relate to their individual academic programs and that specific additional course assignments and requirements beyond those required of master's degree students in the course are clearly understood by both the student and the course faculty.

A Non Program Course Approval Form must be completed and filed with the doctoral and faculty services administrator before registration in the course. (See Appendix D.)

Distance students should be aware that all master's degree courses are not required to be offered by distance.

Form Available: Non Program Course Approval Form

4.13 Dissertation Research

The **Dissertation Research credit (COM 795)** is a doctoral level credit assigned to independent academic work and is directly related to his/her dissertation.

- Dissertation research credit is used towards the candidate's program of study for the purpose of independent work on the dissertation.
- The doctoral candidate may apply a maximum of four dissertation research credits to his/her program of coursework.
- Dissertation research credit may be taken any time after the student has completed **two** of the following research method courses: COM 701, COM 702, or COM 703.
- Dissertation research credit is not a web enabled class; the student must request to be registered under the supervision of a specific faculty member.
- The faculty member overseeing dissertation research credit is normally a faculty member who would work with the student on their dissertation committee and have similar research interests.
- The outcome of the dissertation research credit hours may be a research paper, literature review, a methodology analysis, or an annotated bibliography.
- Dissertation research credit is taken prior to achieving candidacy (successful defense of the qualifying examination).
- Dissertation research credit is graded pass/fail after each semester of registration.

5.0 Qualifying Examination Phase of the Program

5.1 The Qualifying Examination Stage

Note: 2011-2012 dates are: September 29, 30 and February 2,3

The qualifying examination is a stage in doctoral studies at which the doctoral student has completed all coursework for the Ph.D. degree and is now required to demonstrate mastery in both written and oral defense form of the content of all mandatory courses in the program and all courses in their major area of interest. All students are required to take and pass a qualifying examination as part of their admittance to doctoral candidacy for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Before taking the qualifying examination for doctoral candidacy, the student's faculty advisor must choose two additional doctoral faculty members from the School to sit on the student committee to write exam questions, administer, and hear the oral defense of the student's qualifying examination. The student must formally request approval to take the qualifying examination. All doctoral coursework must be complete in order to request approval to take the qualifying examination.

Form Available:

Qualifying Examination Request and Approval Form or
www.regent.edu/acad/schcom/phd/qe_form.html

5.2 Registering for the Qualifying Examination COM 797

Students will register for COM 797 in the semester in which they are actually taking both the written and the oral portions of the qualifying examination. This one credit hour is not applied to the coursework phase of the program. If a student registers for COM 797 and then chooses to defer the exam until the next scheduled exam date, the student will be permitted to withdraw and University deadlines will apply.

In the event of a failure of a portion of the exam or the entire exam, the student will be permitted to retake the entire exam or the portion of the exam failed **only one time**. The retake must be completed within one year of the failed examination or portion thereof, but generally the next scheduled exam date.

The examination is graded on a pass/no pass grade mode. If a student passes a portion of the exam but not the whole exam, a grade of NP (No Pass) will be given. The following semester the student will register for another credit hour of COM 797 and retake the failed portions of the exam. Upon successful passing of all parts of the qualifying examination a grade of P (Pass) will be given.

The **content** of the qualifying examination covers:

- Content of the mandatory courses: COM 705, COM 707, COM 708, and COM 709.
- The one research methods course (COM 701, COM 702 or COM 703) that best represents the approach that will be used on the student's dissertation project.
- Content of the student's major area of study.
- All courses listed on the student's Approved Doctoral Degree Plan.

The qualifying examination has two parts, a written portion and an oral portion. The written portion of the examination covers two consecutive days. The oral examination portion is approximately two hours.

The breakdown of the written portion of the exams is as follows:

Thursday - First Day	Friday – Second Day
8am-12 noon Philosophy and Communication (2 hours) Theology and Communication (2 hours)	8am-12 noon Major Areas of Interest One 4 hour question or Two 2 hour questions
1pm-5pm Advanced Communication Theory (2 hours) History of Communication (2 hours)	1pm-5pm Major Areas of Interest to include Research Methodology One 4 hour question or Two 2 hour questions

For on-campus students the written part of the examination is held in the computer lab located in COM 154. **Qualifying examinations are not scheduled during summer sessions.**

The oral examination portion is usually scheduled any time after a one-week-minimum faculty reading period and lasts approximately two hours.

5.3 Preparation for the Qualifying Examination

The student should plan on taking his/her qualifying examination as close to the completion of coursework as possible. The student should clear his/her calendar before and during the writing period from daily requirements, i.e. take vacation time from work, send the family to relatives, etc.

Before Studying:

- Review the "Competencies" section of both mandatory and major interest area course syllabi
- E-mail committee members with the courses taken, the title/contents of papers, dissertation interest topic, etc. which helps faculty write integrating questions
- Review course textbooks for highlighted areas, notes taken, discussion boards in Blackboard sites, etc.
- Consider forming/joining study groups of other colleagues taking qualifying examinations at the same time
- Talk with those preceding you on their experience and what they would do differently
- Outlining notes and texts serve for many to form a good review format; a study group will make this easier and faster
- Some former students have collected and make available both outlines and "old" questions

While Studying:

- Study habits and styles differ from person to person-find yours and use it
- Discuss course content with others, on-line, face-to-face, and even out of town meetings works for some
- Review major works and authors in communication in general and major interest area in particular; dates are not as important as titles and authors
- Integrate the content of courses; think beyond individual classes; questions will be written with integrating coursework in mind

Preparation for Orals:

- The written answers should be read thoroughly, look up missing or erroneous content
- Only a copy of the written answer may be brought to the oral defense, no notes, no texts, etc.
- Good counsel: In the time between written and orals put aside the written answers and write each question as an open book question – one a day

5.4 Qualifying Examination by Distance

The following are the requirements and procedures of taking the qualifying examinations by distance:

- The student must obtain a proctor who will remain in the vicinity of the examinee during the writing stage of the examination. The proctor must provide his/her curriculum vitae to the Associate Dean for Academics. A proctor is normally paid a modest stipend by the student.

- A proctor is defined as a person with an earned doctoral degree, personally compensated by the examinee for the period of the two days of writing the examination and one day for the period of oral defense of the writing portion of the examination, and who must be approved in advance by the Associate Dean for Academics. Proctors should not be related to the examinee by blood, marriage or friendship, or be in a subordinate work relationship to the examinee.
- Examination questions will be e-mailed to the examinee's proctor fifteen minutes prior to the start of each day's examination EST. The examinee may have only a copy of the Bible and a standard English language dictionary in the examination space. Blank paper for writing and writing utensils are allowed. One blank CD-R or thumb drive is to be used for all exam responses.
- The examinee will print a hard copy of the written portion of the examination at the end of each writing period to be signed by the proctor and the proctor will email the student's response to diancla@regent.edu after each set of questions. The original signed hard copies and the CD will then be US-mailed to the office of Diane Clark, COM 221 at the end of all the writing periods.

5.5 Qualifying Examination Oral Defense

The content for the qualifying examination is the same for the oral portion and the written portion of the examination. The student entering into the qualifying examination oral defense stage should be aware that the only material that may be brought into the oral examination room is a hard copy of his/her written portion of the examination. No content additions may be made on the hard copy of the examination nor will any additional content materials or notes (e.g., handouts, overheads, etc.) be admitted into the examination room. Those who have completed the written portion of the examination by distance have the choice of completing the oral defense on-campus or by phone. The oral exam takes approximately two hours.

The qualifying examination is graded at the completion of the oral portion on a pass or fail basis. Because there are different content portions of the exam, it is conceivable that a student could pass one portion of the content and fail another.

Pass. Once a student has passed the written and oral portion of the qualifying examination, his/her name is brought before the full faculty of the School of Communication and the Arts and voted on to advance the student to candidacy for the doctoral degree. This is done as soon as possible after both portions of the qualifying examination are completed. The doctoral candidate is now considered "all but the dissertation" commonly noted "ABD." In the event of a failure of the entire examination or a portion thereof, the student will be permitted to retake the entire examination or the part of the examination failed only **one time**. The retake must be taken within one year of the failed examination but generally the following semester.

Distinction. A few students will distinguish themselves academically both during their written portion and oral defense portion of the qualifying examination. At the judgment of faculty members reading and hearing qualifying examinations, the honor of passing qualifying examinations "*with distinction*" may be made.

PLEASE NOTE: With a pass on the qualifying examination and advancement to candidacy, the student's examination committee and advisor roles are dissolved.

Form Available: Qualifying Examination Verification Form

5.6 Continuing Registration and Tuition Payment Obligation

ABD candidates and dissertation-defended PhD students must be registered for required tuition costs until all School and University requirements are satisfactorily met.

Continued tuition obligations cover the commitment of a dissertation chair and at least two other faculty committee members, full use of the library and library resources including on-campus resources and distance access privileges, full continuing computer login and e-mail address support, school computer lab hardware use, software packages and laser printing support.

Continuing registration at the University for ABD candidates will constitute **three (3) credit hours of COM 799 per semester, fall and spring** and tuition is payable to the University business office by the payment deadline for each semester.

The student who is still engaged in final manuscript preparation, proofreading, faculty approval, and University clearance, after successful defense of the dissertation will be responsible for **one (1) credit hour for every semester (COM 799)**, fall and spring following the defense semester until all degree clearance requirements are successfully fulfilled.

6.0 Dissertation Phase of the Program

6.1 The Candidate's Dissertation Committee

The first step for the candidate is to **compile a three (3) member dissertation** committee subject to doctoral faculty committee approval from among the doctoral faculty. One member of the dissertation committee is chosen to serve as chair and thereafter helps the candidate select the remaining members of the committee.

No more than one non-PhD. Faculty member may be asked to join the committee as an expert resource in the dissertation area but he/she may not serve as chair. It is the responsibility of the candidate to justify in writing why a non-PhD. faculty member is invited to be on the dissertation committee. This written justification should be attached to the Dissertation Committee Appointment Form.

The candidate should **approach each chosen faculty member personally and formally request the faculty to join his/her dissertation committee**. This committee will serve until the dissertation is successfully defended and the dissertation manuscript is signed.

The candidate must request an individual with a Ph.D. from outside the School and/or School faculty to serve on the dissertation committee as **an outside reader**. Their only official responsibility is to write a testimonial letter to the Associate Dean of Academics at the end of the student's dissertation work affirming their opinion the doctoral caliber of the dissertation. The completion of this responsibility normally warrants a small honorarium from the doctoral program office.

Form Available: Dissertation Committee Appointment Form

6.2 Dissertation Credit

There are two types of dissertation credit hours associated with the doctoral degree program. These are the dissertation research credit (COM 795) and the continuing

dissertation credit (COM 799). COM 795 may be taken during the coursework phase of the program and through the qualifying exam process (see section 6.0). COM 799 is taken during the dissertation phase of the program and is the continuing dissertation credit that will run as an "IP" until the dissertation is submitted to the library for binding. When the Registrar receives the copy of the signed Dissertation Approval Form, a "P" grade will be entered for all COM 799 hours.

The **Continuing Dissertation credit (COM 799)** is for the purpose of remaining enrolled at the University until the dissertation is successfully defended and submitted to the library for binding.

- The candidate must register for **three (3)** continuing dissertation credits per academic term (excluding summer sessions) in order to maintain active student status in the doctoral program.
- After successful defense, the new Ph.D. candidate will remain registered for **one (1)** continuing dissertation credit for every whole or partial semester (excluding summer sessions) until the dissertation committee signs the final dissertation manuscript and all University degree clearance procedures are successfully completed.
- Continuing dissertation credits are graded as IP (in progress) and are changed to P (pass) only upon submission of the dissertation to the library for binding and submission of the completed Dissertation Approval Form to the Registrar which initiates the clearing process.

Form Available: Doctoral Dissertation Committee

6.3 The Dissertation Proposal

Following the completion of the qualifying examination, the candidate will focus his/her attention exclusively on preparing to write the dissertation. The process of dissertation writing formally begins with the dissertation proposal.

The dissertation proposal may differ from student to student on the basis of the research paradigm chosen as the methodology for undertaking the dissertation research. The three research paradigms are the quantitative/social science paradigm, the qualitative paradigm or the historical/critical paradigm.

Quantitative/social science research. The proposal for a dissertation utilizing quantitative research generally includes the following portions:

- The first chapter of what will eventually become the dissertation itself. This first chapter includes the statement of the research problem or question. This necessarily includes the background research, both historical and conceptual, of the dissertation topic.
- A review and description of the methodology to be employed in the investigation of the research problem or question together with the research design proposed for the application of the methodology to the proposed research.
- A bibliography of the previously published research on the problem, the topic and concepts involved in the proposed research.
- An outline of the proposed dissertation.

Qualitative research. The proposal for a dissertation utilizing qualitative methodologies generally includes the following:

- A written presentation of the problem to be researched in the proposed dissertation. This section of the document explores the problem, the significance of the proposed study from a historical perspective and from the perspective of importance to the Academy.
- A thorough review of current and recent academic literature pertinent to the proposed study. This section is intended to lead to the development of the Research Question(s) (RQ) and sustain the argument for the need of the dissertation's study.
- A review and description of the particular qualitative methodology (methodologies) to be used in the dissertation. Care should be taken to fully substantiate the need for and use of the chosen methodology. A clear analysis of how the methodology will be employed both in data collection and analysis is imperative.
- An overall outline of the dissertation. The doctoral candidate should work closely with the committee chair during the preparation of the proposal defense to insure a comprehensive presentation.

Historical/critical research. The proposal for a dissertation utilizing historical/critical research generally includes the following:

- A written presentation of the problem to be researched in the proposed dissertation that addresses the scholarly and practical significance (or "newsworthiness") of the study. Please keep in mind that the fact that a study has not been done before does not alone justify doing it now.
- A presentation of the historical background to the proposed research topic. This presentation should function to bolster reader understanding both of the rationale(s) for conducting the study and of the context surrounding the texts to be scrutinized in the study.
- A review and description of the methodological approach within the historical/critical paradigm to be used in the study's textual analysis.
- A discussion of the specific texts to be analyzed in the study (types, quantity, date range[s]) and how they will be obtained. This discussion should also include a justification for the specific composition of the text sample.
- A bibliography of the previously published research on the problem, the topic, and the concepts involved in the proposed research.
- An outline of the proposed dissertation. The doctoral candidate should work closely with his/her dissertation committee chair during the preparation for the defense of the proposal. The requirements of the chair are paramount.

6.4 Academic Honesty

As should be expected, particularly from a graduate Christian University, students and candidates will adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. This includes the avoidance of plagiarism. Plagiarism is defined as the use of written and oral words or ideas of

another person, including another student, without the expressed acknowledgment of the speaker's or writer's indebtedness to that person. The discovery and proof of plagiarism will result in the immediate expulsion of the student from the doctoral program and expulsion from the University. Plagiarism discovered after a dissertation is defended will result in the revocation of the degree.

6.5 The Dissertation Proposal Defense

The following is to serve as a checklist for the candidate preparing to defend his/her proposal as well as well as an outline of responsibilities and proceedings.

- When the chair and committee members of the candidate's dissertation committee determine that the proposal is ready for defense, the **chair** will notify the doctoral faculty committee **two full weeks before the proposed date for the defense**.
- The candidate should **distribute photocopies of the proposal to all committee members AT LEAST TWO WEEKS prior to the defense**.
- **A date and place for the defense will then be set by the doctoral services administrator** and announced to the School faculty.
- **Dissertation proposal defenses are conducted by the chair** of the student's doctoral dissertation committee. Adequate time should be allotted for the committee to be satisfied with the proposed dissertation. **A two-hour minimum period** of time is the norm.
- The candidate should expect to defend all elements of the proposed dissertation study.
- When all questions are exhausted, the dissertation committee will **excuse the candidate for committee deliberations** regarding the acceptance of the proposal. The candidate will then be asked to rejoin the committee for proposal approval or disapproval.
- The **chair** should then **complete the form soliciting suggestions from the dissertation committee** and notify the doctoral faculty committee of the dissertation committee's decisions and deliberations.

Form Available: Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Defense and Approval Form

6.6 Dissertation Proposal Defense by Distance

The program permits dissertation proposal defenses to be accomplished at a distance via conference call. The candidate should petition the doctoral faculty committee through the doctoral services administrator to the chair of the committee in advance for a distance defense. **The decision to defend a dissertation proposal rests with the dissertation committee chair.**

All required stages to the dissertation proposal must be met as stipulated above. Those stages requiring the exchange of documents may be accomplished by US-mail, FAX, or file attached to e-mail transmission. The candidate's dissertation committee chair will request the defense as in the case of on-campus defenses through the doctoral services administrator.

The procedures for conducting the conference call defense are identical to the on-campus defense except that the candidate will have to indicate the telephone number where he/she may be reached at the prearranged defense time.

6.7 Dissertation Stage

Because of the importance of the dissertation to successful completion of the requirements for the Ph.D. degree, it is necessary to restate important procedures.

- Because candidates in the dissertation writing stage normally have a considerable time beyond coursework to research and write their dissertation, the doctoral faculty find no exigency to rush any dissertation defenses.
- Because dissertation drafts are often voluminous, extended time has to be taken by faculty to seriously read and digest a dissertation's content. The doctoral faculty members normally require that a final draft of a dissertation **be submitted to all dissertation committee members no less than two weeks before the final dissertation defense date. There is no exception to this rule.**
- Students who are planning to graduate in May and are seeking a May degree date on their diploma must meet all University requirements for clearing by the day of commencement. This requires setting a two-week deadline (March 16th) prior to April 1st each year for announcing a final dissertation defense to the doctoral and faculty services administrator.
- Candidates themselves do not determine the defensibility of a dissertation draft. **The defensibility of a dissertation is the province of the chair of the dissertation committee** usually but not necessarily in agreement with the other members of the dissertation committee. It is the chair of a dissertation committee who is required to announce to the Associate Dean for Academics that a defense of a dissertation may be scheduled.
- **No first draft of dissertation material is considered defensible.** Dissertation work is a process of writing and re-writing a number of drafts under the guidance of the chair/committee.
- A defensible draft of a dissertation might be considered a final draft. By a **final draft** is meant that everything essential to a quality doctoral dissertation (chapters, appendices, bibliographies, reference citations, tables, figures, style form, spelling, grammar, etc.) are all complete and contained. It also should be understood that following a dissertation defense, the dissertation committee may require additions or changes to the draft, and that the post-defense draft must be submitted for proofreading which usually entails additional content or form changes.

6.8 Dissertation Phase Timeline and Responsibilities

STAGE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Doctoral Faculty Committee vote for candidacy.	To present the student's academic record to the Doctoral Faculty Committee.	Associate Dean for Academics.
School of Communication and the Arts faculty vote for candidacy.	To present the student's academic record to School faculty.	Associate Dean for Academics.

Announcement of candidacy.	To officially inform doctoral candidate of candidacy status; by U.S. mail.	Doctoral services administrator.
Dissertation committee established.	To formally solicit affirmation from each faculty member to join the dissertation committee and confirm an outside reader.	Doctoral candidate.
Dissertation Committee Form filed.	To record the new dissertation committee and outside reader	Doctoral candidate.
Prepare proposal defense.	To complete the dissertation proposal consisting of Ch.1-3.	Doctoral candidate
Dissertation copies made.	To distribute copies of dissertation proposal to all committee members.	Doctoral candidate.
Dissertation proposal defense scheduled.	To meet with whole committee to defend the dissertation proposal.	Dissertation committee chair and candidate.
Complete writing of dissertation.	To complete research and writing of Ch. 4 & 5.	Doctoral candidate.
Notify committee members of final dissertation defense.	To give committee members adequate time to schedule attendance at defense.	Dissertation committee chair and doctoral services administrator.
Final dissertation defense.	To adequately defend the research and writing of the dissertation draft.	Dissertation committee and doctoral candidate.
Final editing of dissertation document.	To give the new Ph.D. the opportunity to make final changes and additions required by dissertation committee after the defense.	New Ph.D.
Proofreading	To submit the dissertation document for University required proofreading.	New Ph.D.
Publishable edition of the dissertation.	To afford the new Ph.D. the opportunity to make final corrections to the document.	New Ph.D.
Committee signatures sign-off on publishable manuscript of the dissertation.	To bring the dissertation writing process to closure.	New Ph.D. and dissertation committee members.

Final degree clearance.	To clear the new Ph.D. for degree conferral; requires library and Registrar protocols.	New Ph.D.
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6.9 Dissertation Manuscript Writing/Defensible Drafts

Certain expectations should hold true regarding the period between a dissertation proposal defense and the final dissertation defense.

- The student must consider committing a whole calendar year as a **minimum** time period for researching and writing a quality dissertation.
- The doctoral level **organization, grammar, and spelling** are the sole responsibility of the candidate at all stages of dissertation writing. Chairs are not expected to be editors of dissertation drafts. A candidate may hire an outside editor to insure the proper level of dissertation writing.
- No serious candidate should expect a **first draft** of a dissertation to be defensible nor does the doctoral faculty of the School encourage the expectation that such holds true. Equally as well, the first time committee members read a draft of a dissertation should not be the defensible draft.
- No candidate and his/her defensible draft of the dissertation should be encouraged to move towards a formal defense unless all quality standards and all critical standards have been exercised. This means that all committee members have had **adequate close reading, reference and research checking time** to review the draft and feedback responses in writing to both the candidate and his/her dissertation committee chair.
- The defensible dissertation should be in the hands of all committee members **at least two full weeks** before the dissertation defense. At this time both chair and committee members together must agree on the defensible nature of the draft. This may entail a scheduled committee meeting with or without the candidate.
- Given the nature of dissertation research and writing time in the life of a candidate, recognition must be given by the candidate to the demands on dissertation committee members at the end of academic semesters. The candidate must be aware that doctoral faculty have other academic demands on their time and must be able to work within those constraints.
- Candidates should weigh the emotional attachment they may have to walking in a particular commencement exercise against the quality, credibility and honor of a doctoral dissertation. Commencement invitations to family and friends and graduation plans should be made only after a successful dissertation defense is secure.
- No candidate should expect dissertation committee chair and committee members to read any draft of the whole or part of the dissertation in less than the time period the candidate took in writing the draft. Anything less must be individually and personally negotiated by the candidate himself/herself for each instance of a draft submission by each faculty member on the committee (see Models of Committee Participation above).

- There is an **April 1** deadline for dissertation defenses for the spring commencement. This means that the latest date for scheduling a dissertation defense for a May commencement is in mid-March allowing for the two-week requisite notification for a dissertation defense by a committee chair. It is best to plan to distribute a dissertation manuscript of defensible quality much earlier than this.

6.10 Dissertation Defense

Dissertation defenses are not scheduled during summer session or during the first or last two weeks of an academic term. All final dissertation defenses are closed defenses. All final dissertation defenses are done on campus and require a face to face defense with the doctoral candidate and his/her committee.

The following details the order of events surrounding the dissertation defense:

- The chair of the dissertation committee begins the proceeding with a prayer.
- The **candidate then presents the dissertation orally**. The student is expected to take **no more than 20 minutes to present the dissertation**. The chair will give the candidate a five-minute warning signal to end the oral presentation. The candidate may use any form of presentation including overheads, PowerPoint, visual aids, video playback, etc. **The presentation should not be read.**
- Following the presentation, the **candidate's committee will question the candidate** until the committee is satisfied with the candidate's responses. When the chair is satisfied that there are no further questions of the candidate, **the chair excuses the candidate** who retires from the defense room. The chair and committee deliberate on the basis of the written dissertation, the oral presentation and the candidate's defense/responses to questions. The committee decides on any additions or changes in the final written dissertation.
- The committee then asks the candidate to return to the defense room and announces the decision of the committee to the candidate. If a candidate does not successfully defend his/her dissertation, a second opportunity may be offered after a six-month preparation period. The second defense must be rescheduled within a year of the previous defense attempt.
- **A successful dissertation defense qualifies the candidate for walking in the next commencement exercise providing the dissertation is defended prior to the stated deadline (April 1) preceding the date of commencement.** A listing of the candidate's name and dissertation title in the commencement program does not guarantee either the privilege of walking in graduation or the assumed graduation of the candidate if the candidate has not met the April first deadline. There are no exceptions to this requirement.
- Neither the diploma nor official transcripts are awarded until the final approved and signed dissertation manuscript is copied and submitted to the University library for binding. This also includes payment of all costs associated with the binding process as well as any outstanding tuition costs.

6.11 Dissertation Process and Procedures

Final Draft/Proofreader Edition.

- A neat unmarked final draft approved by the candidate's dissertation committee with all committee-required corrections made should be submitted to the proofreader chosen by the candidate. Proofreading by definition includes checking for grammar, spelling and noted style form (APA, MLA, or Turabian).
- The doctoral and faculty services administrator maintains a list of approved proofreaders. **Candidates are required to pay all proofreading costs.**

Dissertation Processing

- The candidate picks up the proofread edition from the proofreader and makes the required final corrections. If there is a question regarding corrections, the final arbiter of corrections to the document is the dissertation committee chair.
- After the proofreading is complete and corrections are made, an electronic copy is sent to the doctoral and faculty services administrator for processing and submission to the library. The administrator will work with the student to complete all forms and the cost of submission including duplication, binding, UMI fees, copyright, and mailing of a personal copy will be posted to the student account.
- The forms needed for final processing are the Dissertation Approval Form, the Library Charges Sheet and the UMI application. Once approved, the Dissertation Approval Form goes to the Registrar's Office. Receipt of this form by the Registrar's Office initiates the clearing process. Continuing dissertation credits are graded at this time. When the student is cleared, his/her degree is posted and a diploma is ordered and final transcripts with the degree awarded may be requested from the Registrar's Office. A diploma order takes 6-8 weeks to process.

Form Available: Dissertation Approval Form

6.12 Student Dissertation Processing

The doctoral and faculty services administrator will facilitate the manuscript copying, obtaining of signatures and processing of the final dissertation manuscript to the Library for all doctoral candidates. There is a \$75.00 processing fee for this service.