

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

Media, Technology, and Society PhD program

A guide for students and advisors

2023-2024

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This handbook is a general guide intended to help graduate students and their advisors navigate through the program. It is not a legal document. For graduate school rules and related documents, students should see The Graduate School (TGS) website. For specific offer of funding, see the student's offer letter.

*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, please review the latest COVID-19 news and updates at this dedicated website: <https://www.northwestern.edu/coronavirus-covid-19-updates>.

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THE PROGRAM

The Media, Technology, and Society (MTS) doctoral program is an innovative, interdisciplinary, and flexible curriculum focusing on the dynamic media and technology environment and its impact. The program encourages students to pursue their passion by designing individualized programs of study that incorporate relevant classes from across Northwestern University. The program faculty is internationally renowned for their research in areas such as:

- Children’s development
- Digital media use and effects
- Health and well-being
- Human-computer interaction
- Innovation and change
- Media institutions
- Networks and organizing
- Social media

The MTS faculty undertake research in these areas using a wide array of traditional and innovative research methods. In addition, they actively pursue opportunities to make positive economic, cultural, and social impact through their research in businesses, nonprofit, and government agencies. Below is a summary of the program’s learning objectives and assessment strategies.

Learning objective(s) <i>Students should ...</i>	Milestone/ Requirement/Capacity	Assessment Strategies and Criteria <i>How do we know this objective has been achieved?</i> <i>What criteria do we have to measure success?</i>
Acquire expertise in teaching	Training workshops and teaching assistant assignments	All students are required to attend at least 2 seminars/workshops offered through the Searle Center for Teaching Excellence. Most students serve as teaching assistants in close coordination with faculty.
Become socialized in the profession	Weekly student organized luncheons	Attendance at weekly luncheons that include guidance on professional socialization, grantsmanship, practice job talks, etc. More senior graduate students demonstrate further competence by organizing these events.
Develop professional networks	Speaker series	Attendance at talks given by thought leaders in media, technology, and society. There are typically 8 to 10 talks a year. We also provide occasions for student to meet individually with speakers.
Contribute original research to scholarly community and develop professional networks	Submitting conference papers	All students are strongly encouraged to submit conference papers. Often this results in acceptance and presentation of papers at scholarly conferences appropriate to the

		student's specialty.
Contribute original research to scholarly community and achieve visibility in the field	Submitting journal articles	All students are strongly encouraged to submit journal articles. Most have articles accepted in scholarly journals appropriate to the student's specialty before their dissertation.
Demonstrate theoretical, methodological, and/or pedagogical expertise appropriate to their specialty	Qualifying exams	Students must complete three qualifying exams overseen by their committee.
Demonstrate professional development	Annual review of graduate students	Student shares plan annually with advisor. DGS and faculty advisors meet to discuss each student's progress. DGS writes each student a letter advising on next steps toward successful degree completion.
Demonstrate ability to conceive original scholarly research	Dissertation prospectus	Approval of the prospectus from the committee.
Demonstrate ability to execute original scholarly research	Dissertation defense	Successful dissertation defense before the committee.

THE FACULTY

Director of Graduate Studies: Claudio Benzecry

(claudio.benzecry@northwestern.edu)

Executive Committee: Daniel O'Keefe, Michelle Shumate

Faculty

Moya Bailey

Claudio Benzecry

TJ Billard

Jeremy Birnholtz

Pablo Boczkowski

Larissa Buchholz

Kalyani Chadha

Aymar Jean Christian

Robin R. Coleman

Noshir Contractor

Ignacio F. Cruz

Leslie DeChurch

Nicholas Diakopoulos

Rayvon Fouché

Elizabeth Gerber

Darren Gergle

Heather Hendershot
Agnes Horvat
Matthew Kay
Bruce Lambert
Duri Long
Yingdan Lu
Erik Nisbet
Bruce Lambert
Barbara O’Keefe

Daniel O’Keefe
Courtney Scherr
James Schwoch
Aaron Shaw
Michelle Shumate
Nathan Walter
Ellen Wartella
Sulafa Zidani

COURSEWORK

Required Courses

MTS 501 (“Introduction to Graduate Research in Media, Technology, and Society”): This course, colloquially referred to as the “proseminar,” introduces students to a variety of Media Technology, and Society (MTS) and Technology and Social Behavior (TSB) subfields and gives guidance on how to be productive and responsible graduate students. Throughout the quarter, MTS and TSB faculty visit the course, with affiliated readings assigned. The course is offered in the Fall quarter and should be taken in the first year.

MTS 503 (“The Practice of Scholarship”): This course, taken in the second year of study, is a practicum focused on professional practices for communication academics and individual consultations on the development of a publishable piece of social science research. The course should be taken in the second year.

MTS 519 (“The Responsible Conduct of Research”): This course, taken in the first year of study, covers the principles and expectations for conducting research ethically and responsibly. The course is required by the School of Communication and Office of Sponsored Research. Please note it is a non-credit course and will not count as 1 unit towards the minimum 3 unit quarter enrollment requirement.

Four additional courses offered by MTS faculty: Students must take at least four letter-graded courses (ABC, not P/NP or S/U) offered by MTS faculty at the 400 or 500 level. MTS 501 (the Proseminar), MTS 503 (the practicum course) and MTS 519 (RCR) do **not** count towards this requirement.

General Distribution Requirements

The Graduate School of Northwestern University (TGS) has university-wide policies and registration requirements that must also be followed in addition to the MTS program requirements. Students should follow these policies as they are required in order to remain active in the program and to graduate. They are as follows:

- [PhD Coursework and Registration Requirement](#)

- [PhD Timeline](#)
- [Full-Time Study Requirement and Authorized courses](#)
- [Change of Registration Policy](#)
- [Continuous Registration Policy](#)
- [Language Courses During The Academic Year Policy](#)
- [Grades and Grade Requirements](#)

Summer Registration

[Summer registration](#) is required for doctoral students receiving funding in the summer quarter from the University. Summer enrollment may also be required as a result of visa or loan status. Students should review the details of their visa or loan to determine if summer registration is required. For detailed information in regards to this, students are responsible for contacting the [Office of International Student and Scholar Services](#) or their loan company directly.

Unfunded students are not typically required to register during the summer, unless in the situations specified above.

Please review the [full-time study](#) and [registration](#) requirements.

Summer enrollment for funded students is usually accomplished by registering full time for 3-4 units. For example:

- 1st and 2nd year students would register for 3 units of [590](#) with their current advisor;
- 3rd year and above students would register for [TGS 500](#).

MTS [590](#) is graded on a P/N/K basis (pass, no grade, in progress). Students should register in a section with their current advisor. Students must notify their advisor that they have enrolled. At the end of summer quarter, students must again contact their advisor and request submission of a Pass or No Pass grade. The advisor will submit a grade dependent on the student's progress.

Please review the [full-time study](#) and [registration](#) requirements.

Other Coursework and Activities

The MTS program has three important activities that all graduate students should attend. Although we do not offer course credit for these activities, students' participation in them is an essential part of graduate student training.

First, we offer a series called MTS Presents: Communication Studies Lunch and Learn. The series is a student-organized event held weekly at noon in the Frances Searle building at Northwestern's Evanston campus. All students and faculty members affiliated with the MTS and TSB programs are invited to participate, and lunch is provided. Each week we host informal presentations and panels from students, faculty members, alumni, and friends to further our joint research community.

Second, we host a visiting speaker series. We invite scholars to come give a talk and also meet one-on-one and over meals in groups with graduate students and faculty during their visit. Students are encouraged both to attend the formal talk and to meet informally with the speakers as part of their introduction to the field.

Finally, during their first year, students are required to attend eight hours of face-to-face responsible-conduct-of-research training, scheduled by the Director of Graduate Studies. These meetings fulfill the requirements of the National Institute of Health and the National Science Foundation for new researchers.

Transfer Students

Degree requirements, timeline, and milestones for transfer students will be determined on a case-by-case basis in conversation with The Graduate School, the student's advisor, and the Director of Graduate Studies.

ADVISING

The Director of Graduate Studies assigns a faculty member to serve as the first-year advisor to each incoming graduate student. The first-year advisor helps orient the student about coursework, research, and other relevant aspects of graduate education. Depending on the evolution of the student's and advisor's academic interests, the first-year advisor might continue in the role of advisor or a different faculty member might become the advisor. Please enter your advisor information in the Graduate Student Tracking System ([GSTS](#)) (See "Satisfactory Academic Progress" section of handbook) by the end of your first year. Also review the [Guidance for Positive Graduate Student and Faculty Adviser Relationships](#) and the [Graduate Educations Expectations](#).

A student can change advisors at any time during the course of graduate studies. Any member of the MTS faculty who is tenured or in a tenure-track position can serve as an advisor (lecturers can serve on committees but not as the main advisor / chairperson). A change-of-advisor may be initiated by either the student or the advisor.

In a student-initiated change of advisors, the student is responsible for both securing the acceptance of the new advisor and communicating the change to the former advisor. Because no student is permitted to pursue graduate studies without guidance from an advisor, a student may not terminate an advising relationship until a new one is in place. Please update advisor information in the Graduate Student Tracking System ([GSTS](#)).

An advisor can decline to continue in that role at any time during the course of the student's graduate studies. If the advisor wishes no longer to serve in that role, the advisor must notify the student in writing by electronic mail. Within 12 weeks of that notification, the student must secure a new advisor. Failure to secure a new advisor will result in probation and subsequent exclusion from the program. During the transition, the current advisor will continue to serve.

At least two other faculty members must serve on the qualifying examination and dissertation committees in addition to the advisor. For your dissertation, TGS requires that two of your three committee members must be members of the graduate faculty. The student should choose these committee members in consultation with the advisor. Not all of these members need to be affiliated with MTS, but at least 50% of the examination and dissertation committees (including the advisor) must be composed of MTS faculty. JD/PhD students must have a least 50% of the faculty from their joint program and at least one faculty member from each program as part of their committee.

PROGRESSING THROUGH THE PROGRAM

The goal of the Media, Technology, and Society Program is to prepare students to become productive scholars and capable members of the academic profession. Students should acquire the proficiencies expected of faculty at a prestigious, Research I university, and an understanding of the three obligations of academic work: teaching, research, and institutional service.

Timeline

	Required Activities	Recommended Activities
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete MTS 501 • Complete MTS 519 (RCR + CITI) • Work with a faculty member or lab on research • Attend the MTS Presents: Communication Studies Lunch and Learn and MTS Speaker Series • Attend at least 2 seminars/workshops offered through the Searle Center for Teaching Excellence • Complete the required Searle Center Quarterly Academic Kickoff and School of Communication Graduate Student Teaching Session before serving as a TA or GA (usually in your second year). The workshop and session takes place in September before the quarter starts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a paper to be submitted to a convention, workshop during year 2 • Develop plan for qualifying examinations with advisor • Participate in admissions and recruitment weekend, other program service opportunities • Become familiar with courses that students typically teach or assist in teaching in their second and third year (205 Theories of Persuasion, 220 Theories of Argumentation, and 270 Theories of Mediated Communication)
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete MTS 503 • Complete master's degree (if necessary) • Complete coursework requirements • Independent and lab research • Attend the MTS Presents: Communication Studies Lunch and Learn and MTS Speaker Series • Satisfactory performance in GA or RA assignment, unless funded otherwise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop personal website for scholarly identity • Submit at least one paper for publication • Complete 1-2 Qualifying Examinations • Participate in admissions and recruitment weekend, other program service opportunities

Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend the MTS Presents: Communication Studies Lunch and Learn and MTS Speaker Series Satisfactory performance in GA or RA assignment, unless funded otherwise (note: student must have served as a GA by the end of the third year) Advance to candidacy (complete qualifying examinations) Develop dissertation proposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and submit additional work for presentation and publication Apply for external fellowship(s), grants, and/or internship(s) to support dissertation research if needed
Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend the MTS Presents: Communication Studies Lunch and Learn and MTS Speaker Series Satisfactory performance in GA or RA assignment Defend dissertation proposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and submit additional work for presentation and publication Plan job market strategy and develop job market materials
Year 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete dissertation and dissertation defense Apply for jobs and/or post-doctoral fellowships Attend MTS Presents: Communication Studies Lunch and Learn and MTS Speaker Series 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete ongoing publications Prepare proposal(s) for research grants, fellowships, and other post-doctoral support

MA DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

A student who enters without a master’s degree must complete an MA thesis, an MA project, or a written MA exam en route to the PhD. Students who do not complete an MA thesis, an MA project or a written MA exam will not be allowed to continue in the doctoral program.

To receive the M.A., the program requires students to (a) complete nine letter graded courses (ABC, not P/NP or S/U) and (b) prepare a conference-quality paper and (c) have no X, Y, or NR grades (check your unofficial transcript through your [CAESAR](#) account to determine eligibility). The paper is completed under the supervision of a three-person committee, composed of the advisor and two other faculty members (please refer to the “Advising” section for committee requirements), during the Fall quarter of the second year. Ideally, the student begins work on this paper during the summer between the first and second years in the program. Approval of a final version of the master’s paper must be received from the committee not later than the last day of classes in the Fall quarter of the student’s second year.

When MA degree requirements are complete, the student is responsible for 1) submitting the “Masters in Primary PhD” form in the Graduate Student Tracking System ([GSTS](#))→TGS Forms, 2) uploading the committee approvals (confirmation email from each committee member to student verifying passed exams) into [GSTS](#) → Documents→

Upload Documents→General and title the File “MA approvals” with name (Last name, First name), 3) submitting the “Application for Degree” form available in [GSTS](#)→ TGS Forms and then 4) submitting the “Masters Degree Completion” form available in [GSTS](#)→ TGS Forms. The department will receive an automated message with instructions to approve the student’s MA degree form. The program assistant will validate passage of the exams by reviewing the committee members’ confirmations already uploaded by the student in GSTS.

Please complete the [MA degree requirements](#) by the [TGS deadline](#).

Students who do not complete the MA degree will not be allowed to continue in the doctoral program.

QUALIFYING EXAMINATIONS

Overview

After completing coursework, but before pursuing dissertation work, a student must be admitted to candidacy. Admission to candidacy is obtained by passing the qualifying examination. The qualifying exam is administered by the student’s committee. At least two of the exams are administered by MTS faculty (one is your advisor and the other should be another MTS faculty member). Ordinarily, the student’s advisor serves as the chair of the committee.

The Nature of the Qualifying Exam

The qualifying exam has three written components. The exam is meant to assess the student’s preparation for subsequent dissertation research.

The first written component is supervised by the chair of the student’s committee. Completion of this component requires writing a research paper of publishable quality. The nature of the project is determined by the student in consultation with the advisor and committee (e.g., whether this is to be new work or a revision of previous work; the time frame for the writing; whether this is based on a question posed by a faculty member, etc.) This part of the exam assesses whether the student is capable of doing high-quality independent research within the student’s major field (i.e., the student’s core research interest).

The other two written components are supervised by two other members of the student’s committee (each component being supervised by a different committee member). Completion requires satisfactory performance on both components. This part of the exam assesses the student’s grasp of material in the student’s minor fields (that is, areas adjacent to the student’s core research interests). These exams are meant to be smaller in scale and scope than the research paper (e.g., less work, shorter papers), and are commonly based on reading lists determined by the candidate in consultation with the examiner. These exams can take a variety of formats, as appropriate to the student’s

circumstances and interests. For example (but only as examples): a weekend take-home exam; one full day of writing in response to a specific question; the design of a course, including development of a syllabus with readings; and so forth.

The committee chair consults with the other members to ensure there is adequate breadth and depth across the three written components of the exam. Although the subject matters of these written components may be related to the student's eventual dissertation work, none of the exam may be used specifically for the purposes of preparing the student's dissertation prospectus.

To facilitate the qualifying-exam process, during the quarter(s) in which the written components are completed, three of the student's classes are MTS 590 Research courses taken with the three examiners. For a student who completes all three written components in the Spring quarter, the student would enroll in three MTS 590 Research courses that term with each examiner. But, for example, a student could enroll in one MTS 590 Research course in the Winter quarter (say, while writing the research paper under the supervision of the committee chair) and then enroll in two MTS 590 research courses in the Spring (while writing the exams for the two other committee members). That is, a student does not need to complete all three written components in the same quarter, and correspondingly does not need to enroll in the three MTS 590 Research courses in the same quarter.

Qualifying Exam Grades and Opportunities for Revising or Retaking

For the first written component (the research paper of publishable quality), the possible grades are "Accept," "Accept with Minor Revisions," "Revise and Resubmit," and "Reject" (along the lines of the outcomes of manuscript submissions to journals); this assessment is provided by the chair of the committee, though consultation with other committee members is common. The first two are considered passes, the last a fail, and the "Revise and Resubmit" grade provides the student the opportunity to retake this portion of the exam by revising and resubmitting the paper. A student who receives a request for revisions of this component (i.e., a grade either of "Accept with Minor Revisions" or "Revise and Resubmit") has no more than six weeks from receipt of the grade to submit the revision.

The other two written components are graded Pass/Revise/Fail; these assessments are provided by the individual committee member supervising the component, though (again) consultation with other committee members is common. A student who receives a mark of "Revise" or "Fail" on one or both of these components has no more than six weeks from receipt of the grade to retake the examination or submit the revision. Students who fail to do so will be subject to probation and eventual exclusion from the program.

Deadlines and Scheduling of the Qualifying Exam

TGS requires that the qualifying exam be completed "by the end of the twelfth quarter," which will typically be the end of one's third year at Northwestern.

For students entering with only a bachelor's degree, this deadline is both sensible and realistic. It permits the fourth and fifth years to be devoted to dissertation work (the prospectus and the dissertation itself).

When exams have been successfully completed, the student is responsible for 1) uploading the examiners' approvals (confirmation email from each examiner to the student verifying passed exams) into the Graduate Student Tracking System ([GSTS](#)) → Documents → Upload Documents → General and titling the File "Qualifying exams approvals" with name (Last name, First name) and when all exams have been completed and uploaded then 2) submitting the "PhD Qualifying Exam" form available in the Graduate Student Tracking System ([GSTS](#)) → TGS Forms. The department will receive an automated message with instructions to approve the student should be admitted to candidacy. The program assistant will validate passage of the exams by reviewing the examiners' confirmations already uploaded by the student in GSTS.

Students should also remind their examiner(s) and request submission of a "Pass" or "No Pass" or "In Progress" official grade for the enrolled MTS 590 Research section. The examiner will submit a grade dependent on the above criteria.

DISSERTATION

Dissertation Prospectus

After the qualifying examination has been passed, the next step is having a dissertation prospectus approved. Ordinarily, a student works with his or her advisor to arrive at an initial draft of the prospectus. This draft should ideally be completed soon after the qualifying exam (say, two or three months). For example, for a student whose qualifying exam was completed in June, the prospectus draft should be completed before the start of the Fall quarter. TGS requires the prospectus be completed by "no later than the fourth year of study, which falls on the last date of the 16th quarter."

The draft prospectus is distributed to the other members of the student's dissertation committee. The dissertation committee must have at least three members (the chair and at least two others, and the majority must be MTS faculty. Please refer to the "Advising" section for committee requirements). Ordinarily the student's advisor serves as the committee chair.

The committee then meets for a proposal defense. The purpose of this meeting is to provide the student with feedback. As an outcome of that meeting, the proposal may be approved, rejected, or the student may be asked to make a series of revisions. In the cases of a rejected proposal, students must defend their proposal again successfully to complete their progress. In the case of a revision, students may work with their advisor and committee to revise their plan, but do not need to convene the committee again. Once a satisfactory final prospectus is in hand, the committee formally signals its approval by vote.

Once a satisfactory final prospectus is approved by the committee, the student is responsible for 1) uploading the committee approvals (confirmation email from each committee member to student verifying passed prospectus) into the Graduate Student Tracking System ([GSTS](#)) → Documents → Upload Documents → General and titling the File “Prospectus approvals” with name (Last name, First name) and then 2) submitting the prospectus form available in the Graduate Student Tracking System ([GSTS](#)) → TGS Forms. The department will receive an automated message with instructions to approve the student’s prospectus form. The program assistant will validate passage of the written exams by reviewing the committee members’ confirmations already uploaded by the student in GSTS.

Dissertation Examination and Submission

Students are encouraged to consult with their committee during the dissertation process, updating them throughout data collection, analysis, and final writing. When appropriate, a final (dissertation oral) examination is scheduled. Students and committees will want to be mindful in scheduling the exam so that relevant TGS graduation deadlines for submitting the completed dissertation can be met. In rare circumstances, the composition of the dissertation examination committee is different than that of the prospectus committee. Students should take care in making changes to their committee and seek the approval of their advisor before making any changes. In addition, students should discuss their prospectus and dissertation progress with any new members of the committee. The committee composition requirements listed for the prospectus committee are the same for the dissertation examination committee (please refer to the “Advising” section for committee requirements).

Students should schedule their dissertation examination after receiving approval from their advisor. A complete draft of the dissertation should be submitted to the committee at least 2 weeks before the scheduled examination. The examination format and duration is determined by the student and their advisor. Students are required to print out the PhD Final Exam Form and bring it to their scheduled final examination. If the student passes, the committee members will sign the form. Students must then submit the signed form to the department program assistant.

As with the dissertation proposal, the examination may result in approval, rejection, or requested revision. In the case of rejection, the student must schedule another dissertation defense meeting. In the case of revision, the student should work with their advisor and committee to complete the necessary changes. When the committee has approved that no further revisions or editing is required, students will submit the dissertation to TGS.

Please review the [PhD Degree Completion Checklist](#) for the complete requirements, approval processing, and steps to receive the PhD degree.

WORK, TEACHING, AND SERVICE

Fellowships, Graduate/Research Assistantships, and Teaching

Work obligations are in residence, a maximum of 20 hours per week, and run from the beginning of the quarter through the day that grades are due (unless otherwise specified in an offer letter). Students with Research Assistantships (also known as RAs) and Graduate Assistantships (also known as GAs or TAs) are employed in professional capacities with responsibilities that come with University research and teaching, respectively. GAs are required to be in residence at Northwestern during their assistantships. GAs are expected to attend every class to which they are assigned on time and to work with the instructor to provide an excellent experience for undergraduate students. Normally, students who teach sections must teach every one of their sections, but in instances where a student has been invited to present a paper at a conference, they may be granted the day off, if the course instructor deems it possible and the student finds an appropriate colleague to substitute for them who is also approved by the instructor. In this case, the GA must ask the instructor at least one month in advance for such absences, and normally not more than one per quarter will be permitted. Medical, legal, or documented family emergencies are an exception, but students must be sure to inform the instructor in advance and they may be asked to provide documentation.

Additional assistantship information including best practices are outlined on the [TGS website](#).

Students are given TA and RA assignments during the fall, winter, and spring quarters, except during their first year of study and their fellowship year. The fellowship year typically is taken in the fourth year.

Students are required in the first year to attend at least two [seminars / workshops](#) that are offered through the Searle Center for Teaching Excellence.

Students are required to complete the [Searle Center Quarterly Academic Kickoff](#) and School of Communication Graduate Student Teaching Session before serving as a TA or GA (usually in your second year). The workshop and session takes place in September before the year in which the student plans to teach.

Typical courses that are assigned GA support include:

- COMM_ST 205 Theories of Persuasion
- COMM_ST 220 Theories of Argumentation

In addition, students are invited to submit a proposal to teach COMM_ST 394 Communication Studies Research Seminar. Students are competitively selected to teach this course based upon the quality of their proposal and priority is usually given to students who have advanced to candidacy. Students selected to teach a COMM_ST 394 course will have this as their GA assignment for the quarter in which the course is offered.

Satisfactory RA and GA performance is part of a student's annual review. The Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Chair will work to ensure that every student has the opportunity to GA during their academic career.

It is the program's expectation that students will fulfill these RA and GA assignments. If there are extenuating or unanticipated circumstances that could prevent students from fulfilling these assignments, students should notify the Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Chair in advance and no later than one month before the start of the quarter. At that point, the situation will be discussed and a resolution will be attempted, but students should be aware that notification of a possible conflict does not on its own negate the assignment.

Assignments are subject to change by the Department Chair's discretion in the event of unforeseen circumstances and as teaching and research needs of the department shift over the course of the year. If a student's assignment needs to be changed to better meet department needs, the student will receive an additional notification before the start of the quarter.

Service to the Program, Department, University, and Professional Communities

Professional service makes up an important dimension of a scholarly career and the MTS program encourages students to pursue appropriate service opportunities as a part of your graduate training. Examples of service include voluntary roles on departmental or program student committees, conference administration, peer review, leadership in campus organizations and/or professional associations. Students should speak to their advisor, the MTS program director, and other faculty mentors to learn more about possible service opportunities and to evaluate whether and how professional service might best fit into your graduate training.

Permission for Additional Work

Graduate students are expected to be full-time students conducting their studies and research and fulfilling program obligations. On occasion another funding opportunity may arise. When that situation occurs, the request for permission to have additional work in addition to GA/TA, RA or Fellowship obligations is required. Please complete the [“Graduate Student Permission to Work Request Form”](#). This form must be completed and approved prior to the student beginning the work. The Graduate School may not be able to approve permission to work requests submitted after the work begins. Students will not be approved for additional work that is more than 15-20 hours per week. The request should provide the nature of the work, the number of hours, the amount of compensation and duration of the proposed work. The form will be reviewed by the student's director of graduate studies and department chair to ensure that the additional work will not interfere with the student's progress towards degree or interfere with any assigned duties. With their support, they will endorse the request electronically and it will be forwarded to the Graduate School Student Funding office. The department and student will be notified via email if and when approved.

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

MTS adheres to The Graduate Schools' criteria for [satisfactory academic progress](#).

Program faculty meets at least once each year, usually in the Spring quarter, to review the progress of students in MTS toward their degrees. In preparation for evaluations, students will be required to submit a report of their activities and progress in the program for the year on a quarterly basis. This report will be generated out of the Graduate Student Tracking System (GSTS). Students should complete this upon enrollment and keep their profile and advisor information updated in this [GSTS](#) system. Please follow the prompts and complete/answer all sections completely and accurately. Missing information will be considered incomplete and may be noted when evaluating progress.

This report should list all courses taken or taught; professional activities, including conference presentations and attendance; publication submissions, noting their status; grants applied for; and any additionally relevant material. It should also provide official status on all major degree milestones. The faculty will review this report, discuss the student's progress at the meeting, and determine whether students are making satisfactory progress toward the Ph.D. and give an official determination of "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" progress. The program director then writes a letter in consultation with the student's advisor, and this is sent to the student and included in their academic file.

Students who receive a report of Unsatisfactory will have 2 quarters to remediate their standing. Details of the necessary steps for remediation will be communicated to the student in their progress report letter. Upon authorization of the program faculty, students who fail to remediate their standing will be excluded/ dismissed from the program.

Students wishing to appeal the program's dismissal decision may appeal the decision to The Graduate School through the Director of Student Services. This [appeal](#) must occur within 10 days of the student's notification of dismissal from the program.

FUNDING

The following provides an overview of MTS student funding arrangements. In general, all MTS students are supported through a mix of assistantships and fellowships guaranteed for a term (currently five years) set by the University and The Graduate School. While funded in this way, tuition and benefits are provided for students in addition to a guaranteed stipend at an annual rate set by The Graduate School. For details, including the current stipend rates, current students should consult the offer letter you signed during the admissions process as well as online resources provided by [The Graduate School](#). In particular, TGS has helpful resources regarding [frequently asked questions](#) on topics such as banked quarters, tax liability, and financial assistance. Additional questions about funding may be directed to faculty advisors and/or the graduate program director.

Students do not typically receive departmental or school funding while they are on an internship. While on internship, program funding typically will be banked for use up to the 6th year. Please discuss the internship with your advisor and notify the program assistant.

Sources of Funding

MTS Students are eligible for four types of funding.

First, they will likely be offered one or more internal fellowships. Fellowships are designed to enable students to have adequate time and support to complete the requirements of the program. For example, students often have a fellowship the year that they complete their dissertation.

Second, all students must GA at least one quarter during their tenure and receive compensation for their activities.

Third, students may receive a Research Assistantship during their tenure. Research Assistantships are offered at the request of faculty members, who often have grant funding to compensate students. In addition, a small number of Research Assistantships are made available through the Department of Communication Studies at the discretion of the Department Chair.

Finally, students are invited and encouraged to apply for [external funding as well as internal university funding](#). The Graduate School is an excellent resource for locating these opportunities.

Students should refer to the admission offer letter to determine their GA or RA and Fellowship schedule.

In addition, students also may be selected by faculty for the following awards:

Award Name: Graduate Dissertation Award

Type: Cash

Award Amount: \$400 per award

Multiple Recipients: Yes

Terms of Award: Given for dissertations of exceptional quality in three areas: rhetoric, mass communication, and interpersonal communication. This award goes to two students who have completed their dissertation each year, across Rhetoric and Public Culture, Technology Society and Behavior, and Media, Technology, and Society programs.

Award Name: Donald H. and Carolyn E. Ecroyd Fellowship

Type: Scholarship

Award Amount: Financial Aid determines

Terms of Award: Established in 1993, this scholarship honors the late Caroline D. Ecroyd, an alumna of the School of Communication. Dr. and Mrs. Ecroyd both spent

many years as university faculty members in the speech field. Mrs. Ecroyd was unable to complete her Ph.D. in communication at Northwestern because of lack of funds. She created this award to assist graduate students for whom the funds would make possible the completion of their doctoral dissertation. Students are eligible for this award during the last year of their doctoral program.

Award Name: Irving J. and Laura Lee Fellowship

Type: Scholarship

Award Amount: Financial Aid determines

Terms of Award: For an outstanding graduate student. Established in 1987 by David Lee to honor and perpetuate the memory of his parents, who met at Northwestern as students and both became School of Communication faculty members, Irving specializing in public speaking and semantics, Laura in children’s language development and disorders.

Funding Schedule

Students should refer to their admission offer letters for their specific funding schedule.

Changes in Funding or Receipt of Awards

Students should notify the department program assistant in advance and no later than a month before of any changes to their funding or receipt of any awards either external or from another university department. Students should provide confirmation from the Director of Graduate Studies and the department program assistant of funding changes or of the detailed award letter. Failure to notify the department can result in not receiving the funds, being paid from an incorrect funding source, or having to return the funds.

Financial Aid Policies

Financial aid policies including Regulations Governing Recipients of University Assistance are provided on The Graduate School [website](#).

Conference Travel

* Please review the latest COVID-19 travel restrictions and requirements at this dedicated [website](#).

Conference travel support is available from The Graduate School, the Department of Communication Studies and the Media, Technology, and Society Program. Students are eligible if they are in good standing with degree milestones and timeline requirements. Students receive support for conferences where they are presenting a paper or on a panel.

Prior to making any travel arrangements, those with GA/TA assignments should ensure that any work responsibilities are covered and course faculty are aware of and have approved any arrangements related to TA absence (See “Work, Teaching and Service” section of handbook).

Travel arrangements for conferences can be completed through [Egencia](#), the university

preferred travel system. Otherwise, travel arrangements can be made independently and after the travel period, students may submit expenses for reimbursement.

Reimbursements are processed after submission of expense reports. See [Graduate Student Travel & Dissertation Support Outline](#) and the [Financial Support FAQ](#) documents.

Graduate students traveling internationally under university-sponsorship or support must abide by the health and safety requirements outlined by the university's [Office of Global Safety and Security \(OGSS\)](#).

The Graduate School- Conference Travel Grant

Information about The Graduate School's Conference Travel Grant is available on their [website](#).

Departmental Awards and Support

The below awards are offered to eligible MTS students for conference travel, annual membership fee, and Dissertation Research support. Please refer to the [Graduate Student Travel & Dissertation Support Outline](#) and the [Financial Support FAQ](#) documents for instructions on applying and payment procedures. For requirements and details on how to apply for the one-time Statistical Training Award, please contact the Director of Graduate Studies for the Media, Technology, & Society program.

Departmental Conference Travel Support:

Students are eligible for up to \$1,250 towards conference travel from the Department of Communication Studies.

[Department Conference Travel](#)

MTS Conference Travel Support:

MTS students are eligible for up to \$500 towards conference travel from the MTS Program. Funds are primarily available to support presenting work and/or participating in a panel or workshop. Other uses of travel support may be reviewed at the discretion of the program director.

[MTS Conference Travel](#)

Annual Membership Fee Support:

The Department of Communication Studies will reimburse or pay the cost of **one** student membership per year to **NCA or ICA** professional organizations. In lieu of NCA or ICA, a combination of any other organizations **up to an aggregate total of \$100** can be covered for the academic year. *Please contact the Accounting Specialist so that funds are dispersed appropriately to cover the fee.*

[Association Membership](#)

Dissertation Research Support:

Graduate students that have passed their Ph.D. Qualifying exams may be eligible for a one-time award up to \$1,750 towards dissertation research expenses. Funds come from the department. Please refer to the [Graduate Student Travel & Dissertation Support Outline](#) and the [Financial Support FAQ](#) documents for instructions on applying and department requirements.
[Dissertation Funding](#)

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

On rare occasions, a student has a conflict with their advisor or committee members. When such a conflict occurs, the student is encouraged to wait 48 hours and then express their concerns directly to the other party in the conflict. If the nature of the conflict is such that the student does not believe that direct communication with the other party will be appropriate or helpful (e.g., sexual harassment, abusive language), the student is invited to communicate their concerns with the Director of Graduate Studies immediately. If the conflict cannot be resolved with the aid of the Director of Graduate Studies, students should contact the School of Communication Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The Director of Graduate Studies or the Associate Dean will develop a dispute resolution plan or take appropriate action to remedy the situation. If a student wants further recourse, a final step is to contact the Graduate School Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Northwestern University does not discriminate or permit discrimination by any member of its community against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, parental status, marital status, age, disability, citizenship status, veteran status, genetic information, reproductive health decision making, or any other classification protected by law in matters of admissions, employment, housing, or services or in the educational programs or activities it operates. Harassment, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is based on any of these characteristics is a form of discrimination. Further prohibited by law is discrimination against any employee and/or job applicant who chooses to inquire about, discuss, or disclose their own compensation or the compensation of another employee or applicant.

Northwestern University complies with federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination based on the protected categories listed above, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX requires educational institutions, such as Northwestern, to prohibit discrimination based on sex (including sexual harassment) in the University's educational programs and activities, including in matters of employment and admissions. In addition, Northwestern provides reasonable accommodations to qualified applicants, students, and employees with disabilities and to individuals who are pregnant.

Any alleged violations of this policy or questions with respect to nondiscrimination or reasonable accommodations should be directed to Northwestern's Office of Equity, 1800 Sherman Avenue, Suite 4-500, Evanston, Illinois 60208, 847-467-6165, equity@northwestern.edu.

Questions specific to sex discrimination (including sexual misconduct and sexual harassment) should be directed to Northwestern's Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equity, 1800 Sherman Avenue, Suite 4-500, Evanston, Illinois 60208, 847-467-6165, TitleIXCoordinator@northwestern.edu.

A person may also file a complaint with the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights regarding an alleged violation of Title IX by visiting www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html or calling 800-421-3481. Inquiries about the application of Title IX to Northwestern may be referred to Northwestern's Title IX Coordinator, the United States Department of Education's Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, or both.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND RESOURCES

How to Register

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/registration-and-courses.html>

Academic Integrity and Dishonesty Procedures

<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academic-policies-procedures/policies/academic-integrity.html>

TGS Calendar with Deadlines

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/about/news-events/calendar.html#resp-tabs3>

Taking Courses at Other Universities

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/about/policies/general-registration-policies.html>

English Language Programs

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/about/policies/general-registration-policies.html>

Teaching Requirement

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/funding/assistantships/graduate-and-teaching.html>

Leave of Absence Process

<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academic-policies-procedures/policies/leaves-of-absence.html>

Parental Accommodation

<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/academic-policies-procedures/leaves-absence/#parental>

Readmission

<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academic-policies-procedures/policies/readmission.html>

Withdrawal Procedure

<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academic-policies-procedures/policies/withdrawal.html>

Petitioning for Extension

<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academic-policies-procedures/policies/satisfactory-academic-progress.html>

Remunerative Work

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/about/policies/financial-aid-policies.html>

TGS External Award Policy

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/about/policies/financial-aid-policies.html>

Grading systems

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/about/policies/general-registration-policies.html>

Hooding and Commencement Ceremonies

<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academic-policies-procedures/graduation/index.html>

Graduation and Diploma Mailing

<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academic-policies-procedures/graduation/index.html>

Best Practice Guidelines for Graduate Teaching Assistants

<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/funding/assistantships/graduate-and-teaching/best-practices.html>

Guidelines for Research Assistants

<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/funding/assistantships/research/index.html>

Key requests or issues

Please send email to gabrielle.anspach@northwestern.edu

Building maintenance requests or issues

Please send email to commstudies@northwestern.edu

Copier access request or issues

Please send email to gabrielle.anspach@northwestern.edu

Room reservation instructions

Please send email to gabrielle.anspach@northwestern.edu

Telephone conferencing at Frances Searle or Annie May Swift

Please send email to gabrielle.anspach@northwestern.edu

Update student profile on program website

Please send email to gabrielle.anspach@northwestern.edu

IMPORTANT CAMPUS OFFICES

Health Insurance

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/graduate-life/health-services/health-plan/index.html>

U-Pass

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/graduate-life/u-pass/index.html>

Wildcard

<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/services-support/community-campus-life/the-wildcard.html>

University Shuttles

<http://www.northwestern.edu/userservices/transportation/shuttles/index.html>

Parking and Safety

<http://www.northwestern.edu/up/parking/>

AccessibleNU

<http://www.northwestern.edu/accessiblenu/>

The Women's Center

<http://www.northwestern.edu/womencenter/>

Gender & Sexuality Resource Center

<https://www.northwestern.edu/norris/services/gender-and-sexuality-resource-center.html>

Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion
<https://www.northwestern.edu/diversity/index.html>

International Student and Scholar Services
<http://www.northwestern.edu/international/>

Legal Services
<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/services-support/legal-services/>

Center for Civic Engagement
<http://www.engage.northwestern.edu/>

Counseling and Psychological Services
<http://www.northwestern.edu/counseling/>

Fitness and Recreation
<http://www.fitrec.northwestern.edu/>

Libraries
<https://www.library.northwestern.edu/>

Off-Campus Life
<http://www.northwestern.edu/offcampus/resources/how-tos/index.html>

Office of Fellowships
<http://www.northwestern.edu/fellowships/>

Office of Human Resources, Parent and Family Resources
<http://www.northwestern.edu/hr/benefits/childcare/solutions/index.html>

Office of the Registrar
<http://www.registrar.northwestern.edu/>

Searle Center for Teaching Excellence
<http://www.northwestern.edu/searle/>

Northwestern Career Advancement (NCA)
<http://www.northwestern.edu/careers/>

Student Affairs
<http://www.northwestern.edu/studentaffairs/>

Volunteerism and Community Outreach
<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/services-support/community-campus-life/volunteerism-community-outreach.html>

Graduate Student Associations and Graduate Leadership and Advocacy Council
<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/services-support/community-campus-life/tgs-affiliated-student-organizations-campus-partners/>

Professional Development Programming for Graduate Students

<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/services-support/professional-development/>