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WHY THE A.Q. MILLER SCHOOL?

Students enroll in the A.Q. Miller School’s graduate program with varying objectives in mind. Some students want to advance their professional careers by taking higher-level courses designed to enhance their knowledge base in a particular field of mass communications. Other students seek to switch from an existing line of work to a media-oriented occupational path. And some students seek to enter the field of higher education through teaching and research. Regardless of your objectives, the A.Q. Miller School’s master’s degree is designed to help you update your credentials and distinguish yourself through a program of applied study of issues, theory, and research in the fields of strategic communications, community media, risk and reputation management, digital audiences and analytics, or health communication.

The School’s graduate faculty has established four primary student learning outcomes that we believe are essential for students who complete our program of study:

- Demonstrate an understanding of mass communications concepts and theories.
- Demonstrate critical thinking and ability to write correctly and clearly in academic forms and styles appropriate for the communications field.
- Apply basic quantitative and qualitative research concepts.
- Evaluate research results using relevant methods.

All graduate classes in your program will be dedicated to accomplishing these goals.

A.Q. Miller School graduate students can choose between two residential tracks. The research track culminates with a thesis, and the professional track culminates with a report describing a creative project.
RECOMMENDED PLAN OF ACTION

**April-May:**
- One-on-one required meetings with graduate director;
- Select supervisory committee and submit Program of Study form to the Graduate School.

**September-November:**
- Proposal submission & defense

**April:**
- Thesis/Report defense

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<td>MC 801 / 802 (thesis track)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(6 credits thesis track or 2 credits report track)</td>
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<td>1 Elective (report track)</td>
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<td>1 Elective</td>
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**TIMELINE REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Individual Required Meeting with Graduate Director (April-May of second semester).
   - The graduate director serves as the initial adviser of all graduate students until they select a supervisory committee chair at the end of the second semester.
   - Each student meets with the graduate director to discuss committee chair and member selection and thesis/report planning.
   - It is student’s responsibility to discuss & complete the Plan of Study with the graduate director, his/her options/selection of a supervising thesis/report professor and committee members. The Plan of Study form is available in Word and PDF format on the Graduate School website (https://www.k-state.edu/grad/students/masters/index.html).

2. Proposal Submission and Defense (September-November of third semester).
   - Each thesis/report supervising professor should meet regularly with his/her advisee(s) during the fall semester to develop and complete each student’s thesis/report into a form ready for presentation to the committee and defense by the end of November.
   - During this semester, supervising professors should:
     o Provide clear expectations about the elements of the proposal.
     o Help develop a timeline that maximizes work on the proposal over the holiday (winter) break.
     o Determine whether or not an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application must be submitted.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

RESEARCH/THESIS TRACK COURSEWORK

30 graduate hours, distributed as follows:

Required (18):
- MC 765 Communication Theory (3)
- MC 780 Research Methods (3)
- MC 850 Applied Research (3)
- MC 801 Advanced Qualitative Research Methods or MC 802 Advanced Quantitative Research Methods (3)
- MC 899 Thesis (6 hours)

Electives (12):
- Two 700-level electives in Mass Communications with adviser approval (6)
- Two non-MC electives (6) with adviser approval

PROFESSIONAL/REPORT TRACK COURSEWORK

30 graduate hours, distributed as follows:

Required (15):
- MC 765 Communication Theory (3)
- MC 780 Research Methods (3)
- MC 850 Applied Research (3)
- MC 770 Mass Communication Practicum (1-3)
- MC 820 Digital Media Audiences and Analytics (3)
- MC 899 Report (2 hours)

Electives (15):
- Two 700-level electives in Mass Communications with adviser approval (6)
- Two non-MC electives (6) with adviser approval
- One additional MC or non-MC elective (3) with adviser approval

COURSE LEVELS

Master’s students should earn a significant majority of their credit hours in courses numbered 700 or above. Courses at the 600-level may be included among electives outside MC, but 500-level courses in the student’s major area are expected to have been completed as undergraduate prerequisites to graduate study or as undergraduate deficiency courses assigned upon admission.

PROBLEMS/INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSES

No more than three (3) hours in problems or other individualized courses may be applied in a 30-hour program. No more than six (6) hours in problems or other individualized courses may be applied in a program of more than 30 hours. Two courses in the Mass Communications program are available:
- **MC 680 Readings in Mass Communications (1-3)**
  Investigation of the literature of mass communications. Three books per credit hour. PR: Senior or graduate standing and consent of supervisory instructor.
- **MC 690 Problems in Mass Communications (1-3)**
  PR: Background from courses needed for problems undertaken.

MC 680 and MC 690 require an individual course proposal with specified learning objectives submitted to the Associate Director of Graduate Studies for approval.
MC COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

MC 612. Gender, Class, Race and the Media. (3)
The portrayal of underrepresented groups by the media, and media employment issues based on gender and race.

MC 712. Environmental Communications. (3)
(Cross-listed with AGCOM 712)
Combines theoretical discussions with practical experience regarding communications about environmental issues and provides introduction to natural and applied science topics related to a communications plan.

MC 720. Ethics in Mass Communications. (3)
Moral analysis, argument and decision-making by the mass communicator.

MC 725. International Communications. (3)
Comparative study of world media systems and the role of mass communications in national development.

MC 730. Seminar in Issues in the Media. (3)
A study of philosophical and technological advances in mass communications with emphasis on projected patterns of future growth and development. May be repeated once when topic varies.

MC 740. Colloquium in Mass Communications. (1-3)
Topic varies depending on expertise of instructor.

MC 745. Seminar in Mass Communication Law. (3)
Analysis of mass communications freedoms and limitations in such areas as defamation, privacy, copyright, censorship, obscenity, and advertising and electronic media regulation.

MC 750. Strategic Health Communication. (3)
The role of effective communication through mass media and other communication strategies in health promotion and behavior change. Includes the theories and strategies used to promote public health messages, services or products for multicultural audiences, with a focus on human, environment and animal health.

MC 760. Issues, Risk and Reputation. (3)
Promotes understanding of strategic communication and media as tools to prepare, mitigate, and respond to threats to public health and safety.

MC 765. Communication Theory. (3)
An examination of major communication theories as they relate to mass communications.

MC 770. Professional Journalism Practicum. (1-3)
For graduate students. Supervised practical work in professional journalism and mass communications. Includes laboratory investigation, field work and internships.

MC 780. Research Methods in Mass Communications. (3)
Survey of research methods used in the study of the mass media.

MC 785. Strategic Communications Management. (3)
Study of various forms of communication management and strategies that further the objectives of an organization, including organizational communication, marketing communication, and public relations.

MC 801. Advanced Qualitative Research Methods. (3)
Introduction to qualitative methods, analysis, interpretation, and writing in media-related fields, and how qualitative inquiry contributes to theory construction in mass communication.

MC 802. Advanced Quantitative Research Methods. (3)
Introduction to quantitative research methodology, design, data collection, and interpretation in mass communication, including survey, experiment, and content analysis.

MC 820. Digital Media Audiences and Analytics. (3)
Theories and concepts related to digital audiences in mass communication. Content strategies and implications of new media technologies for journalism, strategic communication, culture, and society. How media audiences are formed, analyzed, and measured in the digital age.

Study and application of mass media research, its literature and methodology.

MC 899. Research in Mass Communication. (V)
Thesis/Report credit. Pr.: Sufficient training to carry on the line of research undertaken.
K-STATE GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS & FORMS

In addition to the specific departmental requirements for the Master of Science in Mass Communications, the requirements of the Graduate School apply. The link to all requirements and forms is https://www.k-state.edu/grad/graduate-handbook/chapter2.html. It is the responsibility of the graduate faculty working with each graduate student to make sure that all requirements are met by the Graduate School’s published deadlines. All Graduate School forms are available at: https://www.k-state.edu/grad/students/masters/index.html

MINIMUM GRADE REQUIREMENTS

As a graduate student, you will notice that there is a higher level of expectation in terms of classroom performance. The Graduate School and the Miller School both require that students admitted with less than the requisite 3.0 undergraduate grade point average be placed on “probationary” status. After completing nine credit hours of course work at Kansas State University, the student’s progress will be reviewed. Those who have earned grades of B or higher and have accumulated a GPA of 3.0 or higher on their first nine hours (exclusive of individualized study), and removed all deficiencies specified at the time of admission, will be placed in good academic standing.

DISMISSAL

A graduate student will be denied continued enrollment at Kansas State University for:
• Not achieving a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 within 2 semesters for full-time students and within 12 credit hours for part-time students.
• Failure to meet published departmental or University requirements.
• Failure to maintain satisfactory progress toward a graduate degree.
• Failure in the final degree examination (thesis or report defense).
• Failure to acquire mastery of the methodology or content in a field sufficient to complete a successful thesis.
• Qualifying for placement on probation a second time, except when the first period of probation a condition of admission is or when the second period is a condition of reinstatement.
• A recommendation for suspension or expulsion by the Honor Council.

A student who has been denied continued enrollment may petition the Graduate School for reinstatement to the same program or for admission to a different one. Students whose petitions are granted are readmitted on probation as a condition of readmission. In such cases, the Readmission Committee usually stipulates enrollment in a specific number of hours or courses, as well as other conditions for probation.

DEGREE INACTIVITY

A student will be placed in inactive status if he or she is not currently enrolled and has not been enrolled during the previous two years. Once in inactive status, a student must reapply to (and be accepted into) a graduate program before being considered for re-entry by the Graduate School. In order to be allowed to resume graduate studies, the student must meet all requirements for entry at the time of the new application. Inactive students who seek to regain active status will not, however, be required to recreate materials submitted with their original applications and held in their files by the Graduate School. If allowed to regain active status, the formerly inactive student will be subject to all requirements in force in his or her graduate program and in the Graduate School at the time the student returns to active status.

STUDENT RIGHTS & COMPLAINT POLICIES

Every graduate student has:
- Freedom of inquiry, conscience, expression, and association and the right to petition for the redress of grievances.
- The right, to the extent permitted by law, to have any information about his or her opinions and associations unrelated to academic performance or assigned responsibilities that has been acquired by professors or administrators in the course of their work as instructors, advisors, or counselors held confidential at his or her request and not disclosed to others without his or her
consent.

- Freedom from unfair treatment by faculty or administration in the assignment and evaluation of academic work toward the completion of requirements for a particular course.
- The right to due process in the conduct of proceedings pursuant to the provisions of this document or of any proceedings conducted under any other provisions of any other rule or regulation governing Kansas State University.
- The right to immunity from reprisal in the form of University disciplinary action or proceedings for seeking redress pursuant to the provisions of this document.
- Every graduate student is responsible for:
  - The exercise of applicable rights and freedoms, as enumerated above, in a manner that does not materially and substantially interfere with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the institution nor infringe upon the rights of other students, faculty, or staff.
  - Completing the requirements and meeting the standards of any course in which he or she is enrolled.
  - Understanding the legal and ethical standards applicable to scholarship in general and to the student's discipline, and understanding the policies and procedures that the University has in place to ensure compliance with these standards.

The Grievance Policy is designed to resolve concerns and grievances brought by graduate students related to their graduate level academic program as more fully defined below. The formal grievance must be initiated within 6 months of the time that the graduate student knows of the matter prompting the grievance, or the graduate student relinquishes any opportunity to pursue the grievance. Under these procedures, a graduate student is any person who has been formally admitted as a graduate student at the time the alleged events leading to the grievance occurred. A grievance means a dispute concerning some aspect of academic involvement arising from an administrative or faculty decision which the graduate student claims is unjust or is in violation of his or her rights established through formal prior agreement. "Grievances" under this procedure shall include disputes over grades, course requirements, graduation/degree program requirements, and thesis and dissertation committee and/or advisor decisions.

Non-academic conduct of graduate students is governed by the KSU Student Code of Conduct in the Student Life Handbook and the hearing procedures therein. The K-State Honor & Integrity System, as described in the Student Life Handbook, governs issues of academic integrity. Allegations of misconduct believed to constitute discrimination, including sexual harassment as described and defined in the “Policy and Procedure for Discrimination and Harassment Complaints,” in the University Handbook should be referred to the Affirmative Action Office or the Office of Student Life. Allegations of assault covered under the “Policy Prohibiting Sexual Violence” should be referred to the Office of Student Life.

The graduate student should attempt to resolve any grievance first with the faculty member, supervisory committee, or administrator involved. If, after earnest inquiry, the conflict remains unresolved, the graduate student should discuss the grievance with the department head/chairperson or other immediate administrative superior of the respondent, the Academic Dean or his/her designee and, if pertinent, with any relevant departmental faculty member or committee. If the outcome of this conflict resolution process is successful, then the resolution shall be reduced to writing. The resolution should be signed by all participating parties to confirm their receipt of document. Copies of the signed resolution will be provided to the graduate student, respondent, administrative superior, and Academic Dean involved in the conflict resolution session. The official copy shall be sent to the Graduate School to be retained in the student’s file.

If the conflict resolution process is not successful, the Academic Dean and the Associate Dean of the Graduate School will confer within 10 working days to determine if further conflict resolution steps should be pursued. The outcome of this conferral will be shared in writing with all parties.

The goal of the Policy on Gender is to create an environment at Kansas State University in which all students, faculty, and staff interact solely on the basis of individual strengths and characteristics, without having those interactions shaped by generalizations, stereotypes, or valuations based on gender; and to encourage constructive, thoughtful, and gender-sensitive behavior. Kansas State University will maintain academic and work environments that are free of discrimination, racial/ethnic harassment, including sexual harassment and retaliation.
for filing a complaint under this policy. Discrimination or harassment based on race, color, ethnic or national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, ancestry, disability, military status, or veteran status is prohibited. Retaliation against a person for reporting or objecting to discrimination or harassment is a violation of this policy whether or not discrimination or harassment occurred. This Policy is not intended and will not be used to infringe on academic freedom, or to censor or punish students, faculty, employees, or staff who exercise their First Amendment right to express ideas and opinions on any topic.

Persons who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment or expulsion from the university following proceedings prescribed in the University Handbook, or the By-Laws to the Constitution of the KSU Student Governing Association. Remedial actions will be taken to restore any losses. Examples of remedial actions include, but are not limited to reevaluation of a grade, an evaluation completed by someone other than the respondent, reconsideration of an application for employment, placement in a position, back pay and lost benefits, rescission of a disciplinary action, or a change of housing.

Confidentiality Statement: Kansas State University maintains various student records to document academic progress as well as to record interactions with University officials and staff. To protect the students' rights to privacy, and to conform with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), the University has an established the Student Records Policy. Interpretation of this policy is based on experience with educational records, and the policy itself may subsequently be modified in light of this experience. Notice of this policy and of students' rights under FERPA is given annually. The policy is published in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog and in the Course Schedules.

Student Rights According to FERPA

- Right of inspection of records
- Right to challenge records believed to be inaccurate
- Right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable records (with exceptions).
- Right to file complaints of alleged violations of the aforementioned rights.

There are various exceptions and areas of university discretion concerning student FERPA rights. To review further information visit the Student Records Policy section of this site, the Department of Education FERPA Site, or visit the Office of the Registrar in 118 Anderson Hall.

Directory Information

Certain information concerning students is considered to be open to the public upon inquiry. This public information is called directory information and includes: name, local address and telephone number, permanent address, e-mail address, date and place of birth, photograph or likeness, college, curriculum, enrollment status (full/part-time), classification, dates of attendance at Kansas State University, awards and academic honors, degrees and dates awarded, most recent previous educational institution attended, participation in officially recognized activities and athletic teams, and height and weight of student athletes. Directory information as defined above will be released upon inquiry, unless the student has requested that this information not be released. The student's request to have directory information withheld must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar, 118 Anderson Hall. The Office of the Registrar will notify other appropriate University offices by placing a notation within the student information system. See the FERPA Non-Disclosure page for further information and for a copy of the form.
THE THESIS OR REPORT

Students in the residential master’s program in Mass Communications have the option of completing a capstone research thesis or a professional project report. A traditional thesis is a scholarly study reporting the results of original research, while the report includes a creative project component and a written component. The project can include, but is not limited to, a series of news articles, a broadcast program or documentary, an advertising or public relations campaign, an interactive application, a website, or a photo/video project. The written component describes the project, its conceptualization, a literature review to contextualize the project, and a conclusion addressing takeaways, limitations, and implications. The students complete their capstone under the guidance of their adviser and a supervisory committee.

GRADUATE ADVISING

The Associate Director of Graduate Studies serves as all students’ initial adviser. Once students have become acquainted with other graduate faculty members through classes and other opportunities and have begun to formulate their individual research agenda, each student will select a faculty member compatible with the student’s research interests to serve as a supervising professor / committee chair. The student will then work in conjunction with the Associate Director of Graduate Studies and his/her supervising professor to complete the capstone thesis or report.

THE PROGRAM OF STUDY

Every master’s student must file with the Graduate School a Program of Study, which includes a formal list of the courses the student intends to take to fulfill the requirements of the degree (the Program of Study form is available in Word and PDF format at https://www.k-state.edu/grad/students/masters/index.html). The program of study should consist solely of courses directly related to the master’s degree. Full-time students must file their programs before the end of their second semester of graduate study, and part-time students must do so upon the completion of (9) credit hours. The student should prepare the program of study in consultation with the supervisory committee, all members of which must indicate their approval by signing the Program of Study form provided by the Graduate School. The head of the academic unit must then endorse the Program of Study and forward it to the Dean of the Graduate School, whose approval must be received within the first two semesters of graduate work. Subsequent changes in the program of study require approval of all members of the supervisory committee, and if changes are made, a Program/Committee Change form should be submitted to the Graduate School before graduation. General guidelines for preparing a program of study posted on the Graduate School website should be followed when preparing a program of study.

THE SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

The process of selecting a supervising professor takes time, and students should take advantage of opportunities such as Research Colloquia and graduate-student meetings to visit with different graduate faculty members to select the best professors to “fit” with their interests. During their first year, students should also schedule one-on-one meetings with graduate faculty members to discuss their research interests, as graduate faculty members have many commitments and are limited in the number of theses/reports they can supervise or serve on committees for.

Committee Chair/Supervising Professor

Each student completes the thesis or report under the direction of a full-time Mass Communications graduate faculty member, who serves as the thesis/report adviser to the student and chairperson of the student’s three-person committee. The student needs to specifically ask a faculty member to take on this role and complete and submit the appropriate form to the Graduate School as well as make copies for him/herself AND the Director of Graduate Studies and Research.

The chair guides the student toward a successful conclusion, so the student should work closely with the chair, meet regularly, and take his/her advice.

Once a graduate faculty member agrees to serve as an adviser, he/she is responsible for:

- Helping to select the remaining committee members.
- Helping to finalize the thesis/report topic and conceptualize the approach.
• Reviewing and providing feedback on proposal and thesis/report drafts (students should expect to rewrite multiple times).
• Determining when the proposal and final thesis/report are ready to be seen by other committee members.
• Helping to apply for IRB approval (if appropriate) and assisting the student with any conflict-of-interest issues (for example, student work for an employer).
• Reviewing and providing feedback on the thesis before it is routed to other committee members.
• Chairing the defense and completing the appropriate concluding paperwork.

MC Graduate Faculty Committee Members
Each committee should have second and/or third members who are a member of the program’s graduate faculty. Committee members should be selected so that at least one is knowledgeable about the student’s topic or area of interest, at least one has expertise in the research method or information-gathering technique employed in the thesis or professional project, and at least one is knowledgeable about the (mass communication) theory the thesis or report builds upon. This is where previous efforts to get to know graduate faculty members is helpful.

Outside Graduate Committee Members
If the graduate student’s topic is one relevant to an outside discipline (e.g. political science, communication studies, sociology, psychology), the student may select his/her third committee member from that department/program. This selection should be made with the direction and approval of the student’s committee chair.
MEET THE MC GRADUATE FACULTY MEMBERS AND SUPPORT TEAM

Graduate faculty members are professors who have been approved by the Graduate School to chair and serve on thesis and report committees. To form your committee, you should work with your faculty adviser to help determine which faculty are a "good fit" with the subject, the theory, and the methodology, based on their research interests and publications.

LOUISE BENJAMIN  
Professor and Associate Dean  
Office: Calvin 110; louben@ksu.edu

Research interests: media law and history, with an emphasis on broadcast history and regulation, especially early radio from 1900 to 1940

Research methods: historical methods, qualitative methods, legal research methods

BONNIE BRESSERS  
Associate Professor  
Office: Kedzie 206A; bressers@ksu.edu

Research interests: journalism’s responses to the changing news industry and audience behaviors, community journalism and community engagement, the intersection of journalism and public relations, health communication

Research methods: survey research, in-depth interviews, focus groups, case studies

RALUCA COZMA  
Associate Professor and Associate Director for Graduate Studies & Research  
Office: Kedzie 112; cozma@ksu.edu

Research interests: international communication, political communication, social media, science communication, media framing, media uses and gratifications, journalism excellence and credibility

Research methods: content analysis, surveys, experiments, historical research, interviews

BARB DESANTO  
Adjunct Associate Professor  
Office: Kedzie 105; desanto@ksu.edu

Research interests: public relations management, tourism issues, women’s rights

Research methods: qualitative methods
JACOB GROSHEK
Associate Professor and Ross Beach Chair in Mass Communications
Office: Kedzie 111; groshek@ksu.edu

Research interests: online and mobile media technologies; social media uses and effects; network analysis; political communication; science and health communication

Research methods: surveys, experiments, content analysis, network analysis

TOM HALLAQ
Associate Professor and Interim Associate Director of Undergraduate Studies
Office: Dole 179 & Kedzie 104B; thallaq@ksu.edu

Research interests: media literacy, religion and journalism, educational technology and curriculum, digital creative works - especially video

Research methods: mixed-methods, survey development

NIKHIL MORO
Associate Professor
Office: Kedzie 217; nmoro@ksu.edu

Research interests: media law, Internet law, emerging technologies, international communication

Research methods: legal research

DANIELLE MYERS LAGREE
Assistant Professor
Office: Kedzie 219A; danimyers@ksu.edu

Research interests: public relations, strategic planning and messaging, health communication - specifically, how perceptions of trust influence attitudes, behaviors, and involvement within the context of agricultural and health communication; career aspirations and socialization of women and students in PR

Research methods: experiments, surveys, in-depth interviews
NANCY MUTURI
Professor
Office: Kedzie 217A; numuturi@ksu.edu
Research interests: health communication, risk communication, health education and promotion, social change, women and communication, ICTs
Research methods: focus groups, surveys, participant observation, cultural studies, in-depth interviews

SAM MWANGI
Associate Professor and Journalism Sequence Head
Office: Kedzie 206; scmwangi@ksu.edu
Research interests: international communication, media and democracy, development communication, community media, political communication, media and civic engagement, media technology
Research methods: content analysis, surveys, field observations, focus groups, case studies, interviews

IAN PUNNETT
Professor of Practice
Office: McCain; ipunnett@ksu.edu
Research interests: radio history; podcasting; digital technologies; religion and the media; FCC rules
Research methods: historical research, textual analysis, case studies

STEVE SMETHERS
Associate Professor and Interim Director
Office: Kedzie 104A; smethers@ksu.edu
Research interests: media and community engagement, alternative news distribution platforms, news deserts, media history
Research methods: in-depth interviews, focus groups, historical research
ALEC TEFERTILLER  
Assistant Professor  
Office: Kedzie 203  
alect@ksu.edu

Research interests: new media technology, social media and social advertising, streaming television, uses and gratifications, social capital, social influence, entertainment studies

Research methods: online surveys, experiments, data mining and content analysis, online interviews

SUPPORT STAFF

Susan Matzke  
Senior Administrative Assistant  
Office: Kedzie 105  
Phone: 785-532-3928  
smatzke@ksu.edu

Susan Matzke is the main budget officer of the School. She is the contact person for conference travel arrangements. She is also the person you will contact to gain access to individualized or special-permission courses such as MC 690 or MC 899 once you have secured approval from the Associate Director of Graduate Studies. She helps reserve rooms and labs for research and defenses, and is the general “Go-To” person for graduate program matters.
ACADEMIC PROCEDURES FOR THE RESEARCH TRACK

A thesis is a scholarly product that is approved by the student’s supervisory committee, produced in a defined electronic format, and made available to scholars around the world through the K-State Research Exchange (K-REx). The thesis must be produced and formatted according to standards you will find on the Graduate School’s website (https://www.k-state.edu/grad/etdr/index.html). Theses may deal with historical, legal, qualitative, or quantitative studies.

THE THESIS PROPOSAL

The thesis project process begins with the development of a proposal, which should be defended in front of the supervisory committee by the end of the third semester. The proposal is a critical part of the thesis, because it constitutes the road map for the end product. It outlines what the student will do, how s/he will do it, why and when. Once the proposal has been approved by the student’s supervisory committee, it becomes something of a contract. The student promises to do what s/he proposed; the committee promises that if s/he does everything proposed and does it well, the thesis will be approved. In addition, the proposal often, with some additions, deletions and modifications, becomes the first two to three chapters of the thesis. As a result, the proposal is a major undertaking that should be at least 16 to 20 pages long (4,000-word minimum), and the student should plan for at least four to six weeks to work on it. Several examples of thesis proposals are available for perusal in the graduate director’s office.

THESIS PROPOSAL APPROVAL PROCESS

✓ The committee chair carefully reads and critiques the proposal and provides the student with appropriate feedback.
✓ The student redrafts the proposal until the adviser is satisfied that it is academically rigorous and details in full the project to be completed.
✓ Once the adviser approves the proposal, the student must distribute it to the other two committee members at least 10 days before the date of the scheduled proposal defense.
✓ Once approved by the full committee, the student must submit a copy of the proposal to the director of graduate studies and can proceed with collecting data for the thesis or report.
✓ The adviser must type up a memo and send it to the student, supervisory committee, and graduate director outlining any changes and directions agreed upon during the proposal defense.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) OVERVIEW

To protect the rights of human subjects involved in research intended for publication, the IRB is required by federal statute to review proposals for such research before any work may be done. Not all thesis options fall under IRB purview. It is the responsibility of the adviser to walk their advisee(s) through the IRB decision process and establish whether the student needs to seek IRB approval.

If the thesis requires an IRB application, the student cannot begin work on the thesis or project until IRB approval is received.
ELEMENTS OF A THESIS

The organization of a thesis is obviously driven by the nature of the research topic. However, most theses prepared in the Miller School follow the following organization plan:

Chapter I: Introduction
- Introduction: What is the thesis about?
- Background: What led up to the problem?
- Statement of the Problem: State the specific area of concern.
- Purpose of the Study: Outcomes of the research.
- Research Objectives: Specific outcomes.
- Methodology: A summary.
- Conceptual Assumptions.
- Rationale and Theoretical Framework.
- Importance of the Study: Who benefits from the study?
- Definition of Terms: Conceptual, not operational.
- Scope, Limitations and Assumptions: Narrow the focus.
- Outline of the remainder of the thesis.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature
- Overview of the chapter: its organization.
- Theoretical framework and historical background of the problem.
- Overview of recent studies that address the theory the study builds on; general to specific.
- Establish need for the study.
- Brief summary of literature reviewed.
- Research questions and/or hypotheses.

Chapter III: Methodology
- Overview of the chapter: its organization.
- Description of research methodology or approach.
- Research design: operationalization of variables.
- Schedule for conducting the research.
- Pilot studies and sampling plan, if applicable.
- Research instruments (codebook, questionnaires, etc.).
- Data collection plan and recording.
- Data processing and analysis anticipated.
- Summary.

Chapter IV: Analysis of Data (or Findings)
- Findings are presented in tables or charts.
- Findings are reported with respect to furnishing evidence for each research question asked or each hypothesis posed, with appropriate statistics.

Chapter V: Discussion
- Summary: What was done, why it was done, and with what results?
- Each research question and/or hypothesis is dealt with, indicating how each was resolved. How does theory help explain the findings? How do the findings support or diverge from theory?
- Conclusions: The “so what” of the findings. Theoretical and practical implications.
- Recommendations for implementing the findings if appropriate and for further research.
- Limitations and weaknesses.
- Concluding comment: A brief, appropriate conclusion to the study.

Appendices
- IRB form, if applicable.
- Survey cover letter and subsequent mailing reminders, if applicable.
- Copy of questionnaire, codebook, or any research instrument employed.
THE THESIS DEFENSE (AKA ORAL EXAMINATION)

An oral defense of the thesis in front of all committee members is required by the Graduate School. Final examinations should be scheduled early enough to allow the supervisory committee at least **10 days** to review the thesis.

- The student is responsible for scheduling a defense date and time and reserving a room.
  - Student should notify the Graduate School of date, time and location for the defense.
  - One hour should be reserved for the defense.
- One to two days before the defense, the adviser or the student should send an email to remind all committee members of the date, time and place of the defense.
- The student must be registered for the semester in which the defense takes place.

The student must present his or her work in real-time to the full committee and allow time for discussion. Based on Graduate School regulations, all members of the committee must be present and participate in the evaluation process. The examination cannot be held with members absent.

A defense is open to the public, and it generally takes about an hour to complete. At the outset, the student makes a 10-15-minute statement to the committee about what was studied, why it was studied, the results of the study and what the results mean. Committee members then ask questions and offer suggestions to improve the report. Next, the committee votes in closed session on the acceptability of the work and on what changes are needed, if any. Students are then called back to discuss the committee recommendations.

The thesis defense should verify the student’s competence to synthesize information across the student’s program of study. Results of an oral defense are reported to the Graduate School as “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” on the ballot sent.

**Evaluation**

*Satisfactory/Passed*
- Pass with no changes needed to the report.
- Pass with minor changes needed to the report.

*Unsatisfactory/Failed*
- Substantial changes needed because of the one or more of the following:
  - Inadequate literature review
  - Deficient research methodology
  - Deficient statistical analysis
  - Incomplete data collection
  - Deficient source citations
  - Opinion confused with evidence
  - Poor quality of writing

Negative votes by two or more members of the committee constitutes failure. A candidate who fails a defense may take a second examination no sooner than two months or later than 15 months after the failure, unless an extension is granted by the Dean of the Graduate School. No third trial is allowed. The majority of the supervisory committee must vote in favor for the student to pass his/her defense/final exam. The major professor is responsible for returning the signed ballot to the Graduate School.

**AFTER THE THESIS DEFENSE**

Even if the student passes the oral defense, minor revisions are usually required, and it is the responsibility of the adviser to see that they are carried out. As you make changes and ready your final copy, please remember that an abstract, not exceeding 350 words, must accompany each copy of the report. Your report must also include a title page that carries the signature block listing the major professor.

The final copy of your report must be submitted electronically to K-State Research Exchange (K-REx), the official electronic repository for all capstone work completed by graduate students at K-State. Access to all Electronic Theses, Dissertations, and Reports (ETDR) is available at [http://krex.k-state.edu/dspace](http://krex.k-state.edu/dspace).
ACADEMIC PROCEDURES FOR THE PROFESSIONAL TRACK

A report is produced in a defined electronic format and made available to scholars around the world through the K-State Research Exchange (K-REx). The report must be produced and formatted according to standards you will find on the Graduate School's website [https://www.k-state.edu/grad/etdr/index.html](https://www.k-state.edu/grad/etdr/index.html).

A report on a professional project provides students maximum flexibility in their approach to scholarship. It is equal in scholarly rigor to a thesis, but is often distinguished from it by being presented in non-traditional ways, such as websites, videos, documentaries, instructional guides, campaigns, etc. Often, the project is designed for a particular professional purpose (for example, a video to be broadcast on television or a podcast to be used as a series of radio programs) that does not fit the requirements and procedures for a regular thesis.

The creative component provides maximum flexibility in format and enables the student to have wide latitude in conceptualizing and producing a scholarly product. The creative component is well suited for students most interested in the professional rather than scholarly applications of their work. Students completing projects are expected to present a theory or conceptual chapter that explains why their product is needed and how they went about their planning, preparation, and evaluation.

THE REPORT PROPOSAL

The report project process begins with the development of a proposal, which should be defended in front of the supervisory committee by the end of the third semester. The proposal is a critical part of the report, because it constitutes the road map for the end product. It outlines what the student will do, how s/he will do it, why and when. Once the proposal has been approved by the student’s supervisory committee, it becomes something of a contract. The student promises to do what s/he proposed; the committee promises that if s/he does everything proposed and does it well, the report will be approved. In addition, the proposal often, with some additions, deletions and modifications, becomes the first two to three chapters of the report. As a result, the proposal is a major undertaking that should be at least 10 to 15 pages long (2,000-word minimum), and the student should plan for at least four to six weeks to work on it. Several examples of report proposals are available for perusal in the graduate director’s office. Sections of the proposal should include:

- Introduction - A rationale of why the project is necessary or beneficial.
- Literature review – An overview of literature pertaining to the topic being proposed. Where does the project fit in the larger research and professional picture?
- Procedures - An outline of the steps the student will fulfill in the process of completing the project and an explanation of how the project will be researched.

REPORT PROPOSAL APPROVAL PROCESS

✓ The committee chair carefully reads and critiques the proposal and provides the student with appropriate feedback.
✓ The student redrafts the proposal until the adviser is satisfied that it is academically rigorous and details in full the project to be completed.
✓ Once the adviser approves the proposal, the student must distribute it to the other two committee members at least 10 days before the date of the scheduled proposal defense.
✓ Once approved by the full committee, the student must submit a copy of the proposal to the director of graduate studies and can proceed with collecting data for the thesis or report.
✓ The adviser must type up a memo and send it to the student, supervisory committee, and graduate director outlining any changes and directions agreed upon during the proposal defense.
ELEMENTS OF A REPORT

1. The Professional Project Component
The project should demonstrate the student’s mastery of a variety of information-gathering techniques and content-creation styles. A wide array of sources must be used in the preparation of the content. It is expected that the student will use both documentary and human sources, including different levels of sources, from officials and experts to ordinary people affected by or involved in the issue or problem being explored. Content produced for other classes may serve to explore the topic selected for the project, but it should not be the same content used for the report.

Students should submit the content in stages. The adviser will then review each component and return it to the student with comments and suggestions. Students should expect to revise their work. An adviser should let her/his student know how often s/he would like to receive content. Advisers should give the student clear instructions on:
- how much time is needed to review content;
- what revisions may be necessary to achieve a quality piece of work;
- when content is approved;
- when the whole project is approved to be viewed by the rest of the committee; and
- remind the student that committee members must have at least 10 days to review the whole project prior to the defense date.

2. The Written Component
All students must submit a written project report of about 25-30 pages regardless of the type of project they worked on. Much of the material will come from the proposal, but it should be rewritten in the past tense and updated for the final version of the report.

The sections that need to be in the final written document include:

1. Cover page listing thesis project title and all committee members.
2. Abstract
3. Introduction
4. Literature review
5. Method/procedure section and limitations
6. Findings (if appropriate).
7. Final deliverables of the project (e.g., a marketing plan, a series of articles, website screen grabs, usability report(s), a branding campaign, etc.).
8. Discussion/implications (if appropriate).
9. Conclusion.
10. References.
11. Appendices.

Literature Review. The “lit review” is a crucial part of every project report. It helps the student determine what is already known about his or her topic, how the project fits into the larger research picture and serves as a means of gathering relevant information about the topic. The survey of the literature should cover scholarly literature, such as books, articles in scholarly journals and government or privately conducted studies; popular literature, such as work by news organizations and magazines and popular books; and, if appropriate, trade or professional literature, such as magazines, newspapers, newsletters and websites aimed at particular occupations or professions.

Complete Explication of Methods/Procedures. In this section of the project, the student must tell the reader how the purpose discussed in the introduction was accomplished. What approach was used? How was information collected and analyzed? What sources were used? The student should be as specific as possible about sources, both human and digital. How did s/he identify those sources? The student should also address limitations. What did the project not include that a reader or user might reasonably have expected to find? Why was the material excluded? What resources were not available?
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   o Student should notify the Graduate School of date, time and location for the defense.
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   ➢ Deficient research methodology
   ➢ Deficient statistical analysis
   ➢ Incomplete data collection
   ➢ Deficient source citations
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COMPLETING YOUR DEGREE

Once the capstone thesis or report has been successfully defended and the final corrected draft has been filed with the Graduate School, you are ready for graduation. As a graduate degree candidate, you must be enrolled in at least one hour during the semester in which the degree requirements are completed. As stated earlier, your degree will be conferred if you have maintained the requisite 3.0 grade point average and if you have otherwise filed all of the required forms with the Graduate School:

- Program of Study
- Approval of Final Examination Form
- Final Examination Ballot

BEYOND THE MASTER’S DEGREE

Graduate students at the A.Q. Miller School come from a variety of academic and professional backgrounds and have varied career interests and goals. Although it is not possible to address all possible career goals, this section is designed to provide advice for students in several typical career paths.

ADVANCE TO A PH.D. PROGRAM

The A.Q. School does not offer a doctoral degree yet. However, each year several of our students advance from our program to a doctoral program. Those who believe that they might be interested in a Ph.D. program should plan their graduate experience at Kansas State carefully with this in mind. Below are some suggestions.

- In most cases, take one or more statistics courses as part of your program. Demonstration of competence in statistics will often be seen as a “plus” by Ph.D. admissions committees and may also help land a research assistantship.
- Avoid taking special topics or other courses that might not transfer to the Ph.D. program institution. This would include internships, special seminars, and other courses without a clear title or course description.
- Strive to obtain an assistantship that will provide experience that might help secure an assistantship at the Ph.D. institution. Excellent work experience, good teaching skills and experience, or a good research assistantship experience are all helpful.
- The top Ph.D. programs will be expecting high scores so carefully review GRE scores and consider retaking the examination if necessary. Experience shows that the GRE score can be increased by carefully studying GRE training manuals and taking practice tests.
- Strive to submit papers to at least one or more scholarly conferences or journals. Students who have been peer reviewed successfully are much more likely to be admitted to a Ph.D. program because they have shown that they can produce scholarly work.
- Study Ph.D. programs, talk to faculty about selection, and target several programs in advance. Make contact with professors at these programs, visit them, and learn about them. Learn about the individual research interests of faculty at these institutions, and strive to locate specific individuals with whom you would like to work.

TEACHING CAREER

Several of our graduates indicate that they are interested in teaching in mass communications after graduation. Another option is becoming a college media adviser. Students with this interest should strive to find as many opportunities to teach while in the program as possible. This will provide valuable work experience and a track record for future employers that proves they can teach and have taught successfully.

Other tips for those who are interested in teaching include:

- Join a professional communication education association such as the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Broadcast Education Association, or Association for Communication
Excellence. These associations often produce materials useful for teachers, and they are also often involved in accreditation activities.

- Read the Journalism and Mass Communication Educator or other publications about good teaching. Many of these can be found for free at various websites.
- Attend university seminars and workshops offered by the Teaching & Learning Center. These are free and are announced in advance K-State Today.
- Consider a thesis topic that relates to the improvement of teaching in some respect.

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT

Typically, the majority of our graduates obtain positions as communication specialists or strategists with corporations, universities, or non-governmental organizations. Several others obtain positions directly with the mass media. Those who seek professional employment following graduation should monitor job announcements and the placement service operated by the College of Arts and Sciences. Students lacking substantial professional communication experience should consider adding an additional internship to their graduate program. Most journalism jobs give priority to those who have significant professional experience. Many higher-level positions are strategic in nature – they include a strong component of communication management, campaign design, and evaluation. Experience in these areas may improve your chances of qualifying for these positions.

In general, build upon the strengths that you already possess. If you possess valuable international credentials, search for companies and jobs that reflect your assets. If you have newspaper reporting experience, use that as a base to build toward a higher-level newspaper position or to transfer to other areas that look favorably on prior professional reporting experience. Many jobs in public relations, for example, are seeking individuals with two or more years of professional reporting or similar experience.
SERVICES WE PROVIDE TO GRADUATE STUDENTS

RESEARCH SUPPORT
SPSS software is installed on computer terminals in lab 208 and on two computers in the Graduate Teaching Assistant Office (Kedzie 218). One additional license is available 24 hours/day in the Kedzie Think Tank (Room 215). Room 218 provides desk space for graduate teaching assistants in need of a quiet working or meeting space. Kedzie labs are available for faculty and student research projects. You may use the Kedzie labs for thesis or report research, or any scholarly activity pertaining to departmental classes free of charge. To reserve a lab, you should contact the graduate program’s administrative assistant, in Kedzie 105, indicating the exact days and times you will need to reserve the lab.

RESEARCH AND CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION
All graduate students are strongly encouraged to submit their papers for presentation at regional, national and international conferences. Previously our students have presented their papers at the AEJMC, BEA ICA, and NCA. If your paper is accepted for presentation at any of these conferences you can submit an application to the department for a small grant to cover your travel expenses. The student government Association (SGA) regularly sends out call for funding proposals to support graduate student research and presentations. See more information on SGA grants here http://www.k-state.edu/grad/studentcouncil/tgapp.html. The College of Arts and Sciences Deans office also offers funding opportunities for travel of up to $1,000 per fiscal year for graduate students. More information can be accessed at http://artsci.kstate.edu/research/research-travel/index.html. The School of Journalism supplements funding for graduate students to attend conferences up to $450.

RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM IN COMMUNICATION
Three times a semester, The A.Q. Miller School, in collaboration with the Communication Studies department, organizes a research colloquium where faculty and graduate students present research. Graduate students are strongly encouraged to attend. Invitations are sent via the graduate student listserv and posters displayed in the building at least a week in advance.

CAMPUS STUDENT MEDIA AND STUDENTS ORGANIZATIONS
Gaining experience in applied media production and reporting situations could be the hallmark of your graduate degree. Kansas State University has always been known for the quality of its student-operated media outlets, which include the Kansas State Collegian and its online edition, the e-Collegian, the Royal Purple yearbook, 91.9 KSDB-FM, Manhappenin’ and Update magazines, and TV programs, including Channel 8 News and Wildcat Watch. These media outlets provide the opportunity for graduate students to hone their media production skills while completing their advanced degree.

THE HUCK BOYD NATIONAL CENTER FOR COMMUNITY MEDIA
The Huck Boyd National Center for Community Media was established at K-State in honor of McDill “Huck” Boyd, a western Kansas newspaper publisher, who was also active in community affairs and state and national politics. When Boyd died in 1987, his family established the Huck Boyd Foundation in his hometown of Phillipsburg, which created the National Center for Community Media at K-State to serve and strengthen the local newspapers, radio stations, cable systems and other media that play a key role in the survival and revitalization of America’s small towns. Each year, the Center sponsors a lecture on community media at K-State, featuring prominent speakers and workshops dedicated to discussion of issues affecting local media companies. The Center’s mission serves as a catalyst for collaborative research among graduate students and faculty members, and the Center’s well-known national brand is an important factor in promoting project funding.

SCHOLARSHIPS
Graduate students are eligible for several scholarships awarded by the Miller School annually. The deadline is February 1 every year. For more information, visit http://jmc.k-state.edu/current/scholarships/index.html. Reminders and eligibility information are circulated via e-mail by the graduate director at the beginning of each spring semester.