

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

**Media, Technology, and Society PhD program**

---

**A guide for students and advisors**

**2018-2019**

**Last Revised: September 2018**

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.

# Contents

## Contents

THE PROGRAM .....	2
COURSEWORK .....	4
Required Courses.....	4
General Distribution Requirements .....	4
Summer Registration .....	5
Other Coursework and Activities .....	5
Transfer Students.....	6
ADVISING.....	6
PROGRESSING THROUGH THE PROGRAM .....	7
PhD Timeline (Entered program with MA).....	8
MA DEGREE REQUIREMENTS .....	8
Overview .....	9
The Nature of the Qualifying Exam .....	9
Qualifying Exam Grades and Opportunities for Revising or Retaking .....	10
Deadlines and Scheduling of the Qualifying Exam .....	11
DISSERTATION .....	11
Dissertation Prospectus .....	11
Dissertation Examination and Submission .....	12
WORK, TEACHING, AND SERVICE .....	13
Fellowships, Research Assistantships, and Teaching .....	13
Service to the Program, Department, University, and Professional Communities .....	14
Permission for Additional Work.....	14
SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS .....	14
FUNDING .....	15
Sources of Funding .....	15
Funding Schedule .....	16
Changes in Funding or Receipt of Awards .....	16
Financial Aid Policies.....	16
Conference Travel .....	17
Departmental Awards and Support.....	17
CONFLICT RESOLUTION.....	18
ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND RESOURCES .....	19
IMPORTANT CAMPUS OFFICES .....	20

# 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? 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 student 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 achieving 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:** Aaron Shaw ([aaronshaw@northwestern.edu](mailto:aaronshaw@northwestern.edu))

**Executive Committee:** Daniel O'Keefe, Michelle Shumate

### Faculty

Claudio Benzecry

Jeremy Birnholtz

Pablo Boczkowski

Larissa Buchholz

Aymar Jean Christian

Noshir Contractor

Leslie DeChurch

Nicholas Diakopoulos

Darren Gergle

Wendy Griswold

Eszter Hargittai

Brent Hecht

Emöke-Ágnes Horvát

Barbara O'Keefe

Bruce Lambert

Alexis Lauricella

Daniel O'Keefe

Anne Marie Piper

Janice Radway

Madhu Reddy

Courtney Scherr

James Schwoch

Aaron Shaw  
Michelle Shumate  
Ellen Wartella

Nathan Walter  
James Webster  
D. Charles Whitney

## **COURSEWORK**

### **Required Courses**

Two courses are specifically required: MTS 501 (taken in the Fall quarter of the first year) and MTS 503 (taken in the second year).

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.

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

### **General Distribution Requirements**

Courses with at least four MTS faculty at the 400 or 500 level are required. MTS 501 (the proseminar) and 503 (the practicum course) do **not** count towards this requirement.

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 Residency 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. Please review the [full-time study](#) and [residency](#) requirements and [PhD Degree Completion Timeline](#).

Summer enrollment is usually accomplished by registering full time in 3-4 units of MTS [Research 590](#) (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students) or [TGS 500](#) (3<sup>rd</sup> year and above). MTS Research 590 is a graded course. Students should register in a section with their current advisor. Students must notify their advisor that they have so 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 (See "Satisfactory Academic Progress" section of handbook).

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 International Office 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 [residency](#) requirements and [PhD Degree Completion Timeline](#).

## 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 Monday Lunches. The MTS Monday Lunch 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 temporary advisor information in the Graduate Student Tracking System ([GSTS](#)) as referred to on Page 12.

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](#)) as referred to on Page 12.

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.

### MA/PhD Timeline (Entered program with BA)

	Required Activities	Recommended Activities
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete MTS 501</li> <li>• Work with a faculty member or lab on research</li> <li>• Attend the MTS Lunches and MTS Speaker Series</li> <li>• Attend at least 2 seminars/workshops offered through the Searle Center for Teaching Excellence</li> <li>• Complete Responsible Conduct of Research Training- both online CITI training and in person RCR MTS 519 training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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)</li> <li>• Prepare a paper to be submitted to a convention during year 2</li> </ul>
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete MTS 503</li> <li>• Complete master's degree</li> <li>• Attend the MTS Lunches and MTS Speaker Series</li> <li>• Satisfactory performance in GA or RA assignment, unless funded otherwise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with a faculty member or lab on research</li> <li>• Develop personal website for scholarly identity</li> <li>• Submit conference paper (1)</li> <li>• 1-2 Qualifying Examinations</li> </ul>
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend the MTS Lunches and MTS Speaker Series</li> <li>• 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)</li> <li>• Complete three Qualifying Examinations</li> <li>• Complete all coursework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with a faculty member or lab on research</li> <li>• Submit conference paper (2)</li> <li>• Journal submission (1)</li> </ul>
Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend the MTS Lunches and MTS Speaker Series</li> <li>• Satisfactory performance in GA or RA assignment</li> <li>• Defend dissertation proposal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit conference paper (3)</li> <li>• Journal submission (2)</li> <li>• Grant or fellowship submission</li> <li>• Data collection and analysis for dissertation</li> </ul>
Year 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissertation defense</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare research and teaching statements.</li> </ul>



## PhD Timeline (Entered program with MA)

	Required	Recommended Activities
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete MTS 501</li> <li>• Attend the MTS Lunches and MTS Speaker Series</li> <li>• Attend at least 2 seminars/workshops offered through the Searle Center for Teaching Excellence</li> <li>• Complete Responsible Conduct of Research Training- both online CITI training and in person RCR MTS 519 training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with a faculty member or lab on research</li> <li>• 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)</li> <li>• Develop personal website for scholarly identity</li> <li>• Prepare a paper to be submitted to a convention during year 2</li> </ul>
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete MTS 503</li> <li>• Attend the MTS Lunches and MTS Speaker Series</li> <li>• Satisfactory performance in GA assignment</li> <li>• Complete all qualifying examination papers</li> <li>• Complete all coursework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with a faculty member or lab on research</li> <li>• Submit conference paper (1)</li> <li>• Journal submission (1)</li> </ul>
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend the MTS Lunches and MTS Speaker Series</li> <li>• Satisfactory performance in GA or RA assignment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant or fellowship submission</li> <li>• Data collection for dissertation</li> <li>• Submit conference paper (2)</li> <li>• Journal submission (2)</li> <li>• Defend dissertation proposal (prospectus)</li> </ul>
Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend the MTS Lunches and MTS Speaker Series</li> <li>• Defend dissertation proposal (prospectus)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare research and teaching statements</li> <li>• Dissertation defense</li> </ul>
Year 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissertation defense</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare research and teaching statements</li> </ul>

## 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 courses 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, page 5, 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.

In order to be awarded the MA degree, the student should complete the following:  
1) submit the "Application for a Degree" and "Master's Degree Completion" forms available in [CAESAR](#), 2) scan each committee members approval (confirmation email from each committee member to student he/she has passed exam) into the Graduate Student Tracking System ([GSTS](#)) → Documents → Upload Documents → General and title the File "MA degree approvals" with name (Last name, First name) and lastly, 3) notify the department program assistant he/she has passed. The program assistant will validate passage by reviewing the confirmations in GSTS. The TGS master's degree requirements and deadlines are provided on the [website](#).

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 (please refer to the "Advising" section, page 6, for committee requirements). 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 all exams have been successfully completed, the student is responsible for 1) uploading the three examiners approvals (confirmation email from each examiner to student he/she has passed exam) into the Graduate Student Tracking System ([GSTS](#)) →Documents→Upload Documents→General and title the File “Qualifying exams approvals” with name (Last name, First name) and then 2) notifying the department program assistant he/she has passed and should be admitted to candidacy. The program assistant will validate passage of the written exams by reviewing the confirmations in GSTS. The TGS qualifying exam requirements and deadlines are provided on the [website](#).

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 16<sup>th</sup> 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, page 6, 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) through submittal of the PhD Prospectus form available in [CAESAR](#), 2) scanning each prospectus committee members approval (confirmation email to student they have passed) into the Graduate Student Tracking System ([GSTS](#)) →Documents→Upload Documents→General and title the File “Prospectus approvals” with name (Last name, First name) and then 3) notifying the department program assistant he/she has passed. The program assistant will validate passage by reviewing the confirmations in GSTS. The TGS prospectus requirements and deadlines are provided on their [website](#).

### **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, page 6, 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 degree.

## **WORK, TEACHING, AND SERVICE**

### **Fellowships, Research Assistantships, and Teaching**

Work obligations are a maximum of 15-20 hours a week, 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 professor 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 professor deems it possible and the student finds an appropriate colleague to substitute for them who is also approved by the professor. In this case, the GA must ask the professor 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 professor in advance and they may be asked to provide documentation.

Students typically teach during their second or third years in the program, and must GA for a course at least once during their program. Typical courses that are assigned GA support include:

- COMM\_ST 205 Theories of Persuasion
- COMM\_ST 220 Theories of Argumentation
- COMM\_ST 270 Theories of Mediated Communication

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.

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 of changes in enrollment. 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**

To have additional [remunerative work](#) in addition to department GA/TA, RA, or Fellowship obligations, a request for permission is required. Please complete the ["Graduate Student Permission to Work Request Form"](#) and submit it to the department program assistant after securing your advisor's signature. This form must be completed and approved in advance and **prior** to the student beginning the work. The Graduate School may not be able to continue to approve forms 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 department will forward the form to the student's program director, and department chair for review to ensure that the additional work will not interfere with the student's progress toward his/her degree or interfere with any assigned duties. If they endorse the request, the department program assistant will forward it to The Graduate School-Financial Aid 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. Consistent with TGS policies, students receive a mark of Good Standing or Bad Standing. Students are evaluated based upon their coursework, fulfilling the requirements laid out in the Timeline section of this handbook, their performance on qualifying exams and additional milestones, their performance as GAs or RAs, and attendance at program activities. The program director will provide a progress report letter to the student and the advisor, and a copy will be placed in the student's file. TGS, per their requirements, also receives a summary of each student's standing.

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. A GSTS tipsheet is also available [here](#). Please follow the prompts and complete/answer all sections accurately. Missing information will be considered incomplete and may be noted when evaluating progress.

Students who receive a report of Bad Standing 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**

### **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](#). The Graduate School is an excellent resource for locating these opportunities.

Students should refer to the 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 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

Conference travel support is available from The Graduate School, the Department of Communication Studies and the Media, Technology, and Society Program. Typically students receive support for conferences where they are presenting a paper or on a panel.

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 using NU Financials within the [NU Portal](#). See [Graduate Student Travel & Dissertation Support Outline](#) and the [Financial Support FAQ](#) documents.

Information about The Graduate School's program 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 \$1,000 towards conference travel from the Department of Communication Studies.

### MTS Conference Travel Support:

MTS students are eligible for up to \$400 towards conference travel from the MTS Program

### 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 \$75** can be covered for the academic year. *Please contact the Accounting Specialist so that funds are dispersed appropriately to cover the fee.*

### Dissertation Research Support:

Graduate students that have passed their Ph.D. Qualifying exams may be eligible for a one-time award up to \$1,500 towards dissertation research expenses.

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

On rare occasion, 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.

## **ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND RESOURCES**

How to Register

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

Academic Integrity and Dishonesty Procedures

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/about/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>

Language Acquisition

<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

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/about/policies/leaves-of-absence.html>

Childbirth Accommodation

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/about/policies/childbirth-accomodation.html>

Readmission

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/leaves-withdrawal-readmission.html>

Withdrawal Procedure

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/about/policies/withdrawal.html>

Petitioning for Extension

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/about/policies/all-policies.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

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/commencement/>

Graduation and Diploma Mailing

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/about/policies/graduation-and-diploma-mailing.html>

Best Practice Guidelines for Graduate Teaching Assistants

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/academic-student-services/assistantship-best-practices/>

Guidelines for Research Assistants and Advisors

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/academic-student-services/assistantship-best-practices/>

Key requests or issues

Please send email to [commstudies@northwestern.edu](mailto:commstudies@northwestern.edu)

Building maintenance requests or issues

Please send email to [commstudies@northwestern.edu](mailto:commstudies@northwestern.edu)

Copier access request or issues

Please send email to [commstudies@northwestern.edu](mailto:commstudies@northwestern.edu)

Room reservation instructions

Please send email to [commstudies@northwestern.edu](mailto:commstudies@northwestern.edu)

Telephone conferencing at Frances Searle or Annie May Swift

Please send email to [commstudies@northwestern.edu](mailto:commstudies@northwestern.edu)

Update student profile on program website

Please send email to [commstudies@northwestern.edu](mailto:commstudies@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

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/campus-life/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

<http://www.northwestern.edu/norris/services/lgbt/>

The International Office

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

Legal Services

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/campus-life/legal-services.html>

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

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

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/>

Community Building Grants and Activities

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/campus-life/student-groups/index.html>

Graduate Student Associations and Graduate Leadership Council

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/campus-life/student-groups/student-associations.html>

Professional Development Programming for Graduate Students

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/professional-development/>