



DREXEL UNIVERSITY
College of
Arts and Sciences
Communication

GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN COMMUNICATION, CULTURE AND MEDIA

Student Handbook

Updated January 2026

Contents

Student Handbook	1
Program Overview	4
Welcome from the Program Director	4
About the CCM Program	4
Communication Department Contacts	5
Communication, Culture and Media Program	5
Department of Communication.....	5
CCM Faculty	5
University Resources.....	6
Administrative Services.....	6
Student Services.....	6
Academic Calendars and Campus Maps	6
Registration	6
Course Program of Study and Financial Aid.....	7
Applying for Graduation.....	7
Master's Program	7
Curriculum.....	8
Coursework	8
Academic Paper	8
Transfer Credit	8
Independent Study.....	9
Satisfactory Academic Progress	9
Doctoral Program.....	9
Curriculum.....	9
Program Requirements.....	9
Residency Expectations.....	10
Colloquia Series.....	10
Advising.....	10
Annual Review and Satisfactory Academic Progress	11
Time to Completion	11
Milestones.....	12
Plan of Study and Supervising Professor.....	12

Candidacy Examinations	12
Dissertation Proposal.....	14
Dissertation Defense.....	14
Departmental Funding	15
Fellowships.....	15
Travel Awards.....	16

Program Overview

Welcome from the Program Director

Dear CCM Students,

I am delighted to welcome you to the MS and PhD programs in Communication, Culture and Media at Drexel University. This promises to be an exciting year of educational opportunities and experiences designed to provide you with knowledge, skills, and tools to become an exemplary researcher.

You are here because each of you possess great promise to make extraordinary contributions to the social sciences. All the CCM administrators and faculty pledge to give you the best educational experience. We anticipate that you will see yourselves as partners with us on this journey.

Do not hesitate to reach out to your CCM faculty for any questions or concerns.

You have our best wishes for a productive and successful year.

Sincerely,

[Wesley Shumar, Ph.D.](#)

Professor

Director, Graduate Programs in Communication, Culture & Media

Graduate Faculty Member, Communication, Culture & Media

About the CCM Program

The mission of Drexel's graduate program in Communication, Culture and Media is to create new areas of interdisciplinary inquiry and to educate emerging scholars in pursuing bold, original, and socially meaningful research.

The Master's and the Doctorate programs are highly interdisciplinary, drawing from the fields of communication, sociology, anthropology, and linguistics. Graduate students examine these disciplines through multiple critical and empirical lenses, including Marxism; poststructuralism; phenomenology; feminism and queer theory; critical theory; narrative and other discourse analysis; and media representation.

The work of communication, culture and media faculty and students covers a wide range of topics. Some work on consumer culture and commodification, while others study health communication and political topics involving conflict and collective morality. New media studies is a common critical focus in research.

In terms of research approaches, our communication graduate programs strongly favor mixed methodologies. While some faculty conduct content, network, and other statistical analyses, others are more qualitatively oriented, engaged in discourse analysis, in-depth interviews, and ethnography. Many of the faculty cross these methodological divides, equally sympathetic to all.

The PhD program in Communication, Culture and Media develops innovative scholar-teachers who know how to impart theories and studies on the interaction of social forces and communication. Our graduates are trained as committed researchers in quantitative and qualitative approaches to communication study. The program also encourages interdisciplinary approaches to the study of communication and media through faculty strengths in anthropology, communication, linguistics, and sociology.

The Master of Science Program (MS) in Communication, Culture and Media is a great choice for academically oriented students who wish to learn the basics of research and theory in communication and media studies, possibly to test the waters for further study, or to explore a personal fascination with mass media, mediated communication, cultural studies, social change and media. The program also encourages interdisciplinary approaches to the study of communication and media through faculty strengths in anthropology, communication, linguistics, and sociology.

Drexel University is a quarter hour institution with four academic quarters per year, each quarter ten weeks in length, excluding registration and examinations. Each course carries three quarter-hour credits unless otherwise specified.

Unanticipated problems or unique situations may occur, and are resolved through mutual consultation between the student, the appropriate faculty member or advisor, and the Department of Communication faculty who ultimately make decisions guided by their collective and best professional judgment.

Communication Department Contacts

The Department is located at 3201 Arch Street, Suite 100. The phone number is 215-895-2456. Once you become a graduate student, your student I.D. should gain you access to the building. Student IDs are available at the Dragon Card office in the Creese Student Center at 33rd and Chestnut Streets.

Communication, Culture and Media Program

Program Director	Dr. Wesley Shumar	Room 372	n/a	shumarw@drexel.edu
Assistant Program Director	Dr. Alex Jenkins	Room 162	n/a	arj28@drexel.edu
CoAS Grad Asst Director	Nicole Pearson	Room 150	215-895-2524	nmp39@drexel.edu

Department of Communication

Department Head	Dr. Hilde Van den Bulck	Room 152	n/a	hdv26@drexel.edu
Department Administrator	Sharon Wallace	Room 147	215-895-2456	skw@drexel.edu
Department Coordinator	Nicole Benner	Suite 100	215-571-4130	nb3285@drexel.edu

CCM Faculty

A listing of all CCM Faculty members, along with their contact information, can be found in the online [Directory](#).

University Resources

Administrative Services

- [ask.drexel.edu](#)
- [Graduate College](#)
- [Drexel Central](#)
- [Drexel Student Health Plan](#)
- [Human Resources](#)
- [Information Technology](#)
- [Off-Campus Housing](#)
- [Graduate On-Campus Housing](#)
- [Disability Resources](#)
- [Parking Services](#)
- [Identification Card \(DragonCard\)](#)

Student Services

- [International Students and Scholars Services](#)
- [Student Health Center](#)
- [Counseling and Health Services](#)
- [Transportation](#)
- [Bookstore](#)
- [Campus Activities](#)
- [Student Life](#)
- [Drexel Recreation Center](#)
- [Drexel Libraries*](#)

*Graduate students at Drexel can also borrow books from other libraries, including [the libraries of the University of Pennsylvania](#). Ask for a Reciprocal Borrowing Form from the reference desk at Hagerty Library. Take that form to a library at Penn, and you can get a courtesy card. Be sure to take your Drexel ID when you go to Penn's libraries. The number for the Van Pelt Library, located at 34th and Walnut Streets, is 215-898-7555. Visit Drexel Libraries information on [borrowing from other libraries](#).

Academic Calendars and Campus Maps

- [Academic Calendars](#)
- [Events Calendar](#)
- [Campus Directions and Map](#)

Registration

Students can look up courses term by term in the [Term Master Schedule](#) by clicking the desired quarter, college, and subject. Each new academic year is published in July.

See the [Course Registration Process](#) for more detailed instructions on how to register. There is a step-by-step video and a handbook with screenshots. Students register for classes online through the

[DrexelOne](#) portal. During Weeks 4 through 6, you can use the [Schedule Ahead](#) resource to create preferred schedules prior to your [registration time ticket](#). Before you register, you will need to accept the [Student Financial Obligation](#). Then follow the online directions to [add or drop a course](#).

By the end of Week 1 each term, you must [confirm your enrollment](#) in courses specifically for that term.

Course Program of Study and Financial Aid

To meet financial aid requirements for loans and loan deferrals, students must be enrolled at least half-time. At the graduate level, that is at least 4.5 credits per term. Only courses which apply to a specific academic program are eligible for most financial aid. Drexel uses a technology referred to as [Course Program of Study](#) (CPoS) to track registration and make sure aid is only applied to qualified courses.

Realistically, since most graduate courses are three credits each, this means students using federal financial aid to pay for their education or who have loans in deferral while enrolled will need to register for two courses/six credits each term to qualify. In particular, because a Drexel master's program requires 45 credits, this will leave MS students taking two courses per term with one final term when they only have three credits required to complete their degree. Adding an unnecessary course does not help because it will not apply to the degree and therefore is not eligible for aid. If you will be affected, please reach out to Drexel Central for a consultation.

Questions about financial aid should be directed to [Drexel Central](#).

Applying for Graduation

All students must [apply for graduation](#). The application deadline is usually the Monday of Week 5 of the graduation term. The Graduate College [Graduation Requirements](#) page has updated information on dates, deadlines (including final submission of the dissertation document), and the application process for doctoral students. Drexel students need to be registered for at least one credit during the term in which they graduate.

Master's Program

The Master of Science in Communication, Culture and Media requires 45.0 credits of graduate-level coursework and a major research or critical paper that has come out of the student's work while in the program. Almost half of the credits in the program are electives, allowing students to tailor their program to best meet their career goals and interests. A listing and description of all courses in CCM are available in the [Graduate Course Catalog](#).

As per Drexel University Graduate Policy, all program requirements must be completed within five years of a student's initial date of matriculation, including any time spent on a leave of absence. Anyone who exceeds this time may be subject to academic dismissal and would need to apply for Readmission.

Students needing more than the allotted time can apply to the Graduate College for a [Program Extension](#).

For students who need to take a break from their studies, Drexel allows a [Leave of Absence](#) of up to three quarters. Once a student is unregistered for four consecutive terms, they will need to apply for Readmission to the program to rejoin their studies.

Curriculum

Coursework

Core Requirements		6.0
<u>COM 610</u>	Theories of Communication and Persuasion	3.0
<u>CCM 704</u>	Research Methods in Communication, Culture and Media	3.0
Required Electives: Students must choose three of the following options		9.0
<u>CCM 710</u>	Mass Communication and American Social Thought	3.0
<u>CCM 725</u>	Political Communication	3.0
<u>CCM 740</u>	Consumer Culture	3.0
<u>CCM 745</u>	Digital Subjectivities	3.0
<u>CCM 750</u>	Political Economy of Media	3.0
<u>CCM 760</u>	The Body Digital: Biopolitics and New Media	3.0
Additional CCM Electives: Students choose three courses from the CCM rubric at 500-level or above. There are several possible electives in CCM, including special seminars at the 800-level.		9.0
Additional Free Electives: Students choose seven additional courses for a total of 21.0 credits. Any appropriate graduate course offered at the University can serve as an elective if the student has sufficient background to take the course. Suggested courses for free electives might also include: CCM, COM, PLCY, AADM, TVMN, and ENVP.		21.0
Total Credits		45.0

Academic Paper

The MS degree requires the review by two faculty members of a major research or critical paper that has come out of the student's work while in the program. MS students should select an A paper written for a CCM course that represents their interests and best work. They present the paper for review to the program director for a second review outside the class. This should be done by Week 5 of the student's final term.

Transfer Credit

Transfer of graduate courses from elsewhere must be approved by the Program Director. At least 30 credits towards the degree must be taken at Drexel. New students must finalize transfer credit before matriculating into their first term. Current students must pre-approval of transfer credit before taking a course at another institution.

Independent Study

For MS CCM students, there is a limit of six quarter hours of independent study credits acceptable for the degree requirements. All students in the MS CCM program can propose a topic for an independent study at any time. A proposal is required and should be submitted for approval by the Friday of Exam Week **before** the start of the term in which the independent study will be taken. You may obtain a proposal form from the Graduate Assistant Director.

An independent study is an agreement between a student and full-time faculty member to pursue a course of study. They are restricted to students who:

1. want to study a topic beyond an offered course,
2. want to take a course not offered but does fall within the area of expertise of a faculty member, or
3. need a requirement that was not offered during the student's tenure.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Students will be required to meet the minimum standards set forth for good [Academic Standing](#) by Drexel's Graduate College. A graduate student must maintain a minimum 3.00 term and cumulative GPA to progress toward graduation. Students not achieving minimum standards are subject to Academic Probation and may be subject to Academic Dismissal. Policies related to Academic Standing are upheld and overseen by the Graduate College under the [Office of the Provost](#).

Doctoral Program

Curriculum

The PhD coursework is structured around a set of required core courses, a set of required seminars with rotating topics, and electives in graduate communication lecture courses, independent study work, and dissertation credit.

All students in the program take five common core courses. They then take no less than four courses chosen from CCM 800-level seminar offerings. Students are encouraged to take additional seminars after meeting that requirement since seminar courses enable collaborative relationships with professors and introduce students to the scholarly community. In addition to coursework, students will be assigned required teaching and research duties in the fall, winter, and spring terms.

A listing and description of all courses in CCM are available in the [Graduate Course Catalog](#).

Program Requirements

Core Courses

CCM 701	Contemporary Social Theory	3.0
CCM 702	Communication Theory I: Persuasion and Media Effects	3.0
CCM 703	Communication Theory II: Discourse and Semiotics	3.0
CCM 704	Research Methods in Communication, Culture and Media	3.0
CCM 705	Data Analysis in Communication	3.0

Seminars: Students select 12 credits from the five categories of seminars **12.0**

<u>CCM 801</u>	Seminar in Contemporary Theory	3.0
<u>CCM 802</u>	Seminar in Discourse and Semiotics	3.0
<u>CCM 803</u>	Seminar in Structural and Cultural Dynamics	3.0
<u>CCM 804</u>	Seminar in Research Methodology	3.0
<u>CCM 805</u>	Seminar in Communication Ethics	3.0

There are five categories of seminar: one in which students learn advanced work and influences on a specific theorist or theoretical school; one in which students learn about theories of language, discourse and the sign; one that teaches the paradigm of structural dynamics central to social sciences theory and research; one in which students study a research methods approach; and one that deals with approaches to research ethics. Students must take a seminar in each area ([CCM 801](#), [CCM 802](#), [CCM 803](#), [CCM 804](#), [CCM 805](#)). Seminars can be repeated, with a maximum of three courses taken in each area, as long as the subject covered is different each time.

Communication, Culture & Media Electives 27.0

Students may take up to six credits of graduate-level courses outside of the Communication, Culture and Media program rubric. Classes outside the College of Arts and Sciences require approval from the program director.

Dissertation Credits 36.0+

[CCM 998](#) PhD Dissertation Research in Communication, Culture & Media

For the dissertation, students work with a principal advisor, one of the Communication, Culture and Media faculty, and no less than two additional faculty from within the department. Students must find one additional outside reader, and students may bring in up to two outside readers.

Total Credits 90.0+

Residency Expectations

Students are expected to be able to teach and conduct research activities on-campus in University City throughout the duration of their time in the program. Students are also encouraged to participate in Departmental Colloquia and other student development activities. This means students must be living in or near Philadelphia on a full-time basis for the duration of any term in which they are funded as a Doctoral Fellow, close enough that they are comfortable commuting to campus for teaching/research responsibilities and participation in program events.

Colloquia Series

Throughout the academic year, the CCM program holds a series of presentations by both internal and external speakers. Students are expected to attend colloquia when they are offered.

Advising

New doctoral students should schedule a meeting with the Program Director during their first term. This serves as a “get to know you” opportunity, so that the director has a sense of the student’s goals and interests. During this meeting, a tentative plan of study will be created. The plan of study serves to assist the student in making choices among courses and the attainment of professional objectives. It will address faculty the student might work with, courses to be taken, required examinations, and teaching assignments.

At this time, the student can begin to map out their program using the Graduate College's [E-Forms: Road to PhD](#) system. Students complete the first two tabs, Supervising Professor (appointing for now the Program Director) and Plan of Study. Instructions in the form of a Getting Started video and E-Forms Guide can be found on the [Graduate College Forms page](#) under PhD/Doctoral Program Electronic (E)Forms. The student is expected to make satisfactory progress by keeping pace with the Plan of Study.

Students meet annually with the Program Director to discuss their progress in the program, address concerns, and identify areas for improvement.

Annual Review and Satisfactory Academic Progress

Students will be required to meet the minimum standards set forth for good [Academic Standing](#) by Drexel's Graduate College. Students in the doctoral program in Culture & Communication must maintain university wide standards, as well as the GPA standards of the doctoral program in Culture and Communication. Each year after doctoral candidacy is attained, a review of progress will be conducted and recorded via the E-Forms system.

Students must maintain a GPA of 3.5 or higher throughout their doctoral work to graduate. Failure to maintain the minimum 3.5 cumulative grade point average will result in placement on probation. Any student on probation must not only achieve a 3.5 cumulative average within two successive terms following the term in which the deficiency occurred, but also maintain at least a 3.5 term average in any term in which he or she is on probation. Failure to meet either of those requirements will result in dismissal from the CCM doctoral program.

Additionally, CCM guidelines require that students receive an "A" grade in four of the five required core courses. One course in the core may be repeated for a better grade. Students who fail to progress in completion of coursework will be put on departmental probation and evaluated by the program director in the student's annual advising sessions.

Time to Completion

The CCM doctoral program is designed to be completed in five years, although students who enter with a master's degree may be able to complete all requirements in four years. These are general guidelines and there may be variability in individual students' timetables due to specific needs and interests.

Nevertheless, the Graduate College [Time to Completion Policy](#) sets a seven-year limit on doctoral work (including any time spent on a [Leave of Absence](#)). It is very important that students remain mindful of these time limits as they plan their course of study, research proposal and dissertation research and write-up. Funding is only guaranteed for the five years of study, providing the student remains in good standing.

Students needing more than the allotted time can apply to the Graduate College for a [Program Extension](#) with the support of their Supervising Professor and the Program Director. A student who exceeds their time to completion is subject to academic dismissal from the program, in which case they would need to reapply for admission to the University.

Milestones

Plan of Study and Supervising Professor

During the first program year, doctoral students consider which faculty member would be a best advisor for their exams and dissertation. In fall of the second year, the student will meet with the program director to evaluate their plan of study progress and to discuss selection of an individual advisor. Once agreed upon between the student and faculty, the Supervising Professor is formalized by updating the E-Forms system.

Students should meet regularly with their advisor and/or the program director to discuss coursework, progress in the program, professional development, and any difficulties that may be encountered.

Students will also be regularly advised of their standing in areas of progress toward the Ph.D. degree, coursework, research, teaching, and professional development via a yearly oral and written evaluation or student annual review. For questions regarding the program or curriculum, the student's advisor, the program director, and the program coordinator can be consulted.

Candidacy Examinations

CANDIDACY EXAM COMMITTEE

Appointed by the Graduate Director, there is a candidacy exam committee made up of at least three members of the CCM faculty. The Candidacy exam committee has a chair, appointed by the CCM Graduate Director and at least two additional members. The committee is in charge of supervising all stages of the candidacy exam. The candidacy examination comprises three sections: theory, content, and methods. Students must pass all three sections to progress to doctoral candidacy.

GENERAL TIMELINE

Students will meet with the Candidacy Exam Director in January of their first year to go over the exam procedure and address their concerns. All students will have completed and submitted their candidacy exams by **June 15** of their second year.

EXAM QUESTIONS

Students select their own mentor for each section of the Candidacy Exam. Students may work with the same mentor or a different mentor for each question. Exam questions and bibliographies are to be developed by the student in collaboration with the faculty mentors they have chosen for each section of the exam.

Students will complete a response to the theory question first, followed by responses to the content and methods questions.

THEORY QUESTION

Beginning with a particular theorist, school, model, or historical era applicable to the student's dissertation research, students will trace the development of a theory. Students should offer contrast to at least two other theories, schools, models, or eras.

It is suggested that questions and an annotated bibliography be submitted to the Candidacy Exam Committee for approval by Week 5 of the Fall term, and that a preliminary outline or draft of the response to the Committee by the end of Week 10. Students may continue to work on their response after the term ends.

CONTENT QUESTION

Students will gather, explore, and become fluent in the content or behavior they would like to study on their way to completing their dissertation. Fluency should extend to how that content or that behavior has been studied in the past. The response should be adaptable to a literature review to be included in the dissertation.

It is suggested that questions and an annotated bibliography be submitted to the Candidacy Exam Committee for approval by Week 5 of Winter term, and that a preliminary outline or draft of the response to the Director and Committee by the end of Week 10. Students may continue to work on their response after the term ends.

METHODS QUESTION

Students will gather, explore, and develop fluency in the methods relevant to the type of study they intend to conduct for their dissertation. This fluency should include the ability to conceptualize their own research design and critically examine how the method has been applied, both successfully and unsuccessfully, in other studies, with attention to methodological rigor. Students are expected to articulate their chosen method(s) in detail, justify their methodological choices, and discuss the inherent limitations of the approach.

It is suggested that questions and an annotated bibliography be submitted to the Candidacy Exam Committee for approval by Week 5 of Spring term, and that a preliminary outline or draft of the response to the Committee by the end of Week 8. Students may continue to work on their response after the latter deadline.

FORMAT

Responses will be take-home. Answers should run between 15 and 20 double-spaced pages, excluding references. Students may write in whatever style (APA, Chicago, MLA) suits them so long as the style is accurately applied.

EVALUATION

The faculty mentor for the Content section of the exam and the Candidacy Exam Committee will grade the exam responses and determine whether a student has passed or failed the candidacy exam. There are four possible outcomes:

- *Recommend* – the student has passed that portion of the exam.
- *Recommend With Provisions* – the student has passed but will be asked to improve their answer based on the committee's suggestions.
- *Do Not Recommend* – the student has not passed a section of the exam and will be asked to make substantial improvements to the answer.
- *Do Not Recommend/Failure* – the student has failed two sections or more of the exam.

If a student fails one section of the exam, the mentor and student may arrange for a retake due by a date established by the mentor and approved by the Candidacy Exam Committee, but no later than the end of the summer term. If the retake exam is still not passed, the student will be dismissed from the program.

If a student fails two of the sections of the exam, they will be dismissed from the program.

Dissertation Proposal

Within six months of successful completion of the qualifying exams, doctoral candidates should select their Dissertation Advisory Committee. The committee must consist of at least five members, at least three of whom must be currently tenured or tenure-track CCM faculty members. At least two of the committee members must be from outside of student's primary specialization area. At least one of the committee members must be from outside the University. Full-time, non-tenure track Research Faculty are also eligible to serve on the Dissertation Advisory Committee, including as Co-Supervising Professor. The Committee must then be filed with the Graduate College via the student's E-Forms record.

In their third or fourth year, the candidate should present their doctoral proposal. Students must be registered during the term they present their proposal; therefore, summer terms should be avoided. The meeting should be scheduled beginning Week 1 and no later than Monday of Exam Week. Once a date and time are chosen, inform the Grad Assistant Director to add to the CCM schedule, and the Department Coordinator to reserve a room.

The written draft must be given to the Dissertation Advisory Committee at least 10 business days before the scheduled meeting. The proposal presentation usually lasts 1 ½ hours and consists of the following parts (all times are approximated):

- Presentation of work by candidate (25 minutes)
- Questions from the Dissertation Advisory Committee and audience (30 minutes)
- Private discussion by the Dissertation Advisory Committee (15 minutes)
- Notification of results and future guidance given to the candidate (15 minutes)

Successful submission of the proposal is filed with Graduate College through E-Forms by the Supervising Professor and Committee Members.

Dissertation Defense

For the dissertation, students work with their Supervising Professor and their Dissertation Advisory Committee. Students should defend the dissertation and graduate towards the end of their fourth or fifth year, depending on whether they entered the program with a master's or bachelor's degree.

The dissertation is scheduled via E-Forms at least four weeks in advance of the defense date. The defense will be publicized on the Graduate College website. Candidates should schedule their defense to allow enough time to make any revisions following the oral defense and to resubmit for approval prior to the posted [completion deadlines](#). The meeting should be scheduled beginning Week 1 and no later than Monday of Exam Week. Anything outside this timeframe needs approval from the program director. Once a date and time are chosen, inform the Grad Assistant Director to add to the CCM schedule, and the Department Coordinator to reserve a room.

The written dissertation must be given to the Dissertation Advisory Committee at least 10 business days before the defense. The dissertation defense usually lasts about two hours and consists of the following parts (times are approximated):

- Presentation of work by candidate (45 minutes)
- Questions from the Dissertation Advisory Committee and audience (30 minutes)
- Private discussion by the Dissertation Advisory Committee (30 minutes)

- Notification of results given to the candidate, with explanation of any edits and/or revisions required (15 minutes)

Within 48 hours, the Committee must record the outcome in E-Forms. The successful candidate makes the required revisions and re-submits a final version of the dissertation to the Supervising Professor. Once approved, the dissertation with all required forms is turned in to the Drexel Hagerty Library. A final E-Forms section must be completed to notify appropriate offices in order to ensure clearing for graduation.

Departmental Funding

Fellowships

All CCM doctoral students receive full-time tuition remission and a stipend for five years in the program. The tuition remission is for nine credits per term for three terms each year (fall, winter, spring). The current stipend is \$22,000 per year, paid monthly in increments of approximately \$2,444 at the end of each month from October through June.

TEACHING

In return, students are expected to work in teaching roles for those three quarters each academic year. Students will be asked to teach combinations of recitation section leadership, and/or standalone courses, dependent on experience and whether the student enters the program with a master's degree in a Communication-related or Social Sciences field. PhD students are required to hold office hours while teaching. They will need to be living in or near Philadelphia on a full-time basis for the duration of any term in which they are funded with an assistantship, close enough to commute to campus for teaching responsibilities.

First-year students are paired with Drexel professors who mentor students as teachers in two courses each term. Most first-year students have no prior teaching experience, which may make the role of teaching assistant intimidating. Fortunately, the department and the university provide several resources to assist the graduate students through this process. The greatest resources for advice, information, and materials, of course, are the professors and the graduate students who were formerly TAs themselves for the same course. International students attend the International Teaching Assistant Program each summer for training specifically geared to their needs. The Teaching and Learning Center runs a [TA Orientation and Mentorship Circle](#) for students each year that students can take as many times as they would like. Students are required to participate at least once.

Beginning in their second year, doctoral students lead five classes per year as primary instructor. Occasionally, teaching units can be replaced with a research assistantship if a faculty member has need for help with a project. This must be requested by the faculty person and approved by the program director.

While teaching, doctoral students will be closely monitored by the program director and receive course evaluations from their classes at the end of each term. These can be discussed with the program director towards learning successful strategies for pedagogy. All doctoral students are expected to adhere to the same ethical standards as Drexel University faculty and staff while teaching. Instructors should be clear, consistent, and objective in developing classroom policies and assigning grades to their students. Doctoral students must always maintain strictly professional relationships with their students.

If a student takes longer than five years to complete their doctoral program, students will be financially responsible for all costs of remaining in the program.

The Department of Communication makes every effort to offer interested students the opportunity to teach one course each summer term. First preference is given to international students in F-1 status, as their visa status does not easily allow them to work off-campus. Students are paid for summer courses at the adjunct rate, currently \$1,000 per credit.

[RESEARCH](#)

Teaching fellowships can be replaced by research fellowships when a faculty member has grant funding that can replace part/all of the graduate fellowship stipend and tuition remission, as required by the College of Arts and Sciences. Otherwise once per year, one teaching unit can be replaced with a research unit if a faculty member has need for help with a project. This must be requested by the faculty person and approved by the program director.

[Travel Awards](#)

The CCM doctoral program seeks to facilitate the professional development of its students. In accordance with this goal, students in the program participate in a number of professional organizations, seminars and colloquia, and research collaborations at local, regional, national, and international levels. Students should be consulting with their advisors and the program director regularly to generate such opportunities for participation.

Students who wish to present papers at conferences should contact the Program Director in the months prior to the meetings to request departmental funding for these endeavors. Pending availability of funds, the Communication Department will provide small grants for membership, registration, and/or travel costs.

[Taxes](#)

For information on taxes, see the University Comptroller's [Graduate Student Funding and Taxation Policy](#).