

School of Professional Studies
Graduate Student Handbook
June 2026

Master of Arts in Organizational Communication

Graduate Certificate in Professional Management

Graduate Certificate in Professional Workplace Communication

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This handbook provides an overview of important information to support student success in the Master of Arts in Organizational Communication, Graduate Certificate in Professional Management, and Graduate Certificate in Professional Workplace Communication programs. Students will find program-specific guidance, as well as information related to the School of Professional Studies and the University of Kansas. This handbook is intended to complement, not replace, the policies and requirements outlined in the [KU Academic Catalog](#).

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION PROGRAMS SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Organizational Communication Programs Introduction

The Organizational Communication graduate programs at the University of Kansas School of Professional Studies have developed as a connected set of graduate options for working professionals who want to strengthen their communication, leadership, management, and organizational effectiveness skills. The programs include the Master of Arts in Organizational Communication, the Graduate Certificate in Professional Workplace Communication, and the Graduate Certificate in Professional Management.

In recent years, the programs have grown in visibility, enrollment, and student interest. The M.A. program and certificate programs serve students across a wide range of professional backgrounds, including higher education, human resources, project management, internal communication, training and development, law enforcement, research, marketing, change management, and related fields. The Graduate Certificate in Professional Workplace Communication also serves as a pathway for some students who later decide to continue into the full M.A. program.

Program Overview

The Master of Arts in Organizational Communication is designed for early- and mid-career professionals seeking advanced communication competencies related to organizational culture, team productivity, leadership, management, and career growth. The program emphasizes the role of communication in building trust, managing conflict, supporting employee engagement, leading organizational change, communicating across differences, and developing effective workplace programs.

The Graduate Certificate in Professional Workplace Communication provides focused graduate study in workplace communication topics. This certificate is appropriate for students who want to strengthen their ability to communicate effectively across organizational contexts without completing the full M.A. degree.

The Graduate Certificate in Professional Management provides graduate-level coursework for students who want to develop or strengthen management-related knowledge and skills. The certificate emphasizes practical competencies connected to leading people, managing projects, communicating effectively, and navigating professional responsibilities.

Program Structure and Course Delivery

Courses in the Organizational Communication graduate programs are offered online in eight-week sessions. Depending on the course, students may complete work in synchronous, asynchronous, or combined formats. The M.A. in Organizational Communication consists of 30 credit hours, including required coursework, elective coursework, and the PFS 898 capstone experience. The graduate

certificates each consist of 12 credit hours and may be completed as stand-alone credentials or, when appropriate, as part of a longer-term academic plan.

Students are encouraged to work closely with the Program Director and academic advising staff to develop a course sequence that supports their goals, timeline, and professional responsibilities. Many students complete one course at a time, while others may choose a more accelerated pace when appropriate.

Student Support and Success

The program is committed to supporting students from admission through completion. Students receive support through academic advising, regular communication from the Program Director, orientation resources, course planning assistance, and access to broader KU graduate student resources. The program also emphasizes community-building among students, including mentoring and peer connection opportunities designed to help students feel supported throughout their graduate experience.

Continuous Improvement

The Organizational Communication graduate programs are regularly reviewed and refined to ensure that coursework remains current, rigorous, and professionally relevant. Program faculty consider student feedback, workplace trends, employer needs, enrollment data, assessment results, and course outcomes when making program improvements. Recent areas of emphasis include applied learning, professional writing and presentation skills, ethical communication, team-based work, inclusive organizational practices, and connections between coursework and students' professional goals.

Organizational Communication Programs Directory

Directory information for faculty and advisors.

<u>Role</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Office Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
Program Director and Professor of the Practice	Jordan Atkinson, Ph.D.	913-897- 8665	atkinson@ku.edu
Associate Teaching Professor	Emily Vietti, Ph.D.	913-897- 8464	evietti@ku.edu
Lecturer	Tess Koppelman, M.A.		tesskoppelman@ku.edu
Lecturer	Marissa Wiley, Ph.D.		mwiley1@ku.edu
Lecturer	Jacquelyn Eidson, Ph.D.		jacquelyneidson@ku.edu
Lecturer	Debra Carter, Ph.D.		tejcarter@ku.edu
Lecturer	Sarah Beth Webb, M.A.		sarahbeth.webb@ku.edu
Lecturer	Karina Addari, Ph.D.		karina_addari@ku.edu
Lecturer	Sara Pitts, Ph.D.		sarapitts@ku.edu
Academic Advisor	Parveen Mozaffar	913-897- 8560	parveen@ku.edu
Academic Advisor	Bryce Jackson-Litteken	913-897- 8729	brycejacksonlitteken@ku.edu

Who to Ask Chart:

Chart identifying who to ask for certain questions

Question regarding:	Who to Contact
Course grade	Course Instructor
Course syllabus	Course Instructor
Degree plan	Jayhawk Academic Advisor
Dropping a course	Jayhawk Academic Advisor
Enrolling in Courses	Jayhawk Academic Advisor

Student Services

Graduate Academic Advisors within Jayhawk Academic Advising deliver comprehensive support that is intentionally structured around the student lifecycle: Connection, Entry, Progression, Completion, and

Transition. Each phase is designed to meet students at their current stage and guide them forward with purpose. Students are encouraged to engage proactively with their advisors to receive individualized assistance, including academic planning, enrollment guidance, connection to university resources, program-specific advising, and the cultivation of meaningful advisor-student relationships that foster academic and professional success.

Policies

Jayhawk Academic Advisors are a primary point of contact to discuss and understand various policies related to graduate education at KU.

HIPAA, FERPA, & Privacy Policy Guidelines: All graduate students are expected to follow the KU Privacy Office policies and procedures, regardless of their funding situation or assistantship placements. See <https://policy.ku.edu/provost/privacy-policy>

Graduate programs in Organizational Communication follow the [graduate regulations](#) of the School of Professional Studies.

Degree Requirements & Procedures

Academic Catalog

Students are subject to the degree requirements in the catalog of the year they are admitted until they graduate, unless they voluntarily move to newer degree requirements. Previous versions of the KU Catalog can be found under [Catalog Archives](#). Students may opt-in for new degree requirements once a new catalog is published, however students cannot revert to the degree requirements for an older Catalog year.

Master's Degree in Organizational Communication Requirements

The graduate programs in Organizational Communication practice a holistic admission process that considers students' academic background as well as work experience. Admission requirements for the graduate program in Organizational Communication can be found in the KU Catalog at the following link:

- [Master of Arts in Organizational Communication | The University of Kansas Academic Catalog](#)

Degree requirements for the graduate program in Organizational Communication can be found in the KU Catalog at the following link:

- [Master of Arts in Organizational Communication | The University of Kansas Academic Catalog](#)

Sample degree plans for the graduate program in Organizational Communication can be found in the KU Catalog at the following link:

- [Master of Arts in Organizational Communication | The University of Kansas Academic Catalog](#)

The admission application to the graduate program in Organizational Communication can be found at the following link:

- [KU Graduate Program Admission Application](#)

Professional Workplace Communication Certificate Requirements

Admission requirements for the graduate certificate program in Professional Workplace Communication can be found in the KU Catalog at the following links:

- [Graduate Certificate in Professional Workplace Communication | The University of Kansas Academic Catalog](#)

Degree requirements for the graduate certificate program in Professional Workplace Communication can be found in the KU Catalog at the following links:

- [Graduate Certificate in Professional Workplace Communication | The University of Kansas Academic Catalog](#)

The admission application to the graduate certificate program in Professional Workplace Communication can be found at the following link:

- [KU Graduate Program Admission Application](#)

Professional Management Certificate Requirements

Admission requirements for the graduate certificate program in Professional Management can be found in the KU Catalog at the following links:

- [Graduate Certificate in Professional Management | The University of Kansas Academic Catalog](#)

Degree requirements for the graduate certificate program in Professional Management can be found in the KU Catalog at the following links:

- [Graduate Certificate in Professional Management | The University of Kansas Academic Catalog](#)

The admission application to the graduate certificate program in Professional Management can be found at the following link:

- [KU Graduate Program Admission Application](#)

Students must enroll in a certificate program before they have completed all the coursework that would count toward certificate completion. Certificate credentials cannot be retroactively applied if the final course required to complete the certificate was previously completed.

Plan of Study

Each student is required to have a Plan of Study that outlines required courses and anticipated time to program completion. Students work with their Jayhawk Academic Advisor to create and submit a plan of study consistent with the degree requirements in the relevant KU Catalog edition. Please see the Catalog Overrides This Document Statement section below. Students will meet with their advisor after admission to their respective program.

Together with the School of Professional Studies, Jayhawk Academic Advising provides students with a holistic advising model. In this model, the Jayhawk Academic Advisor serves as primary contact for enrolled students to provide support for logistics of graduate processes, requirements, and resources. This model leverages personalized, proactive outreach and provides accurate and timely information about program and policy requirements.

Enrollment Information

Graduate students in Organizational Communication programs follow these guidelines:

- Students need to meet with their Jayhawk Academic Advisor to develop a degree plan to ensure they enroll in courses that will meet the degree requirements consistent with their KU Catalog Year
- Students should check in Enroll & Pay for any holds on their account that might delay their ability to enroll in courses.
- Students are not required to enroll during the summer semester. Students who find it necessary to skip enrolling in either a fall or spring semester need to complete a request for a leave of absence through their Jayhawk Academic Advisor.
- Specific enrollment may impact financial aid eligibility, and enrollment in locations or courses outside of the Organizational Communication program may have a different tuition and fee cost.
- Students are encouraged to enroll each semester promptly, as courses with low enrollment may be canceled as the beginning of the semester approaches.

Grading

Graduate courses in Organizational Communication and associated certificate programs utilize the following grading scale:

Grading Scale: A, B, C, D, F, (I)

As is defined in KU's [Graduate Grading policy](#), the basic system is an A, B, C, D, F, (I) scale, where:

- A designates above average graduate work;
- B designates average graduate work;
- C designates passing but not average graduate work;
- D and F designate failing graduate work.
 - Grades of D and below do not count toward fulfilling degree requirements and cannot be counted toward a degree or certificate. See [policy](#).
- Inclusion of the I (Incomplete) option is at the discretion of the instructor.

Additional information related to grades and academic standing is located in the subsequent School of Professional Studies sections:

- Academic Misconduct
- Good Academic Standing
- Minimum Grade Requirements
- Incomplete Grades
- Student Progression

Expectations Related to the Capstone Course

- Students in the Master of Arts in Organizational Communication complete a capstone experience near the conclusion of the degree. The capstone provides students with an opportunity to integrate and apply concepts from the program through a focused final project.

- Students will consult with program faculty to determine the appropriate capstone pathway and timing for enrollment in PFS 898.
- Students may complete either a Research Paper capstone, which involves original research on an organizational communication topic, or an Applied Project capstone, which involves developing a professionally oriented program, training, workshop, class, or related resource.
- Students will receive ongoing mentorship from the course instructor as they develop their capstone project.
- Upon completion, students will orally present their capstone project to the course instructor and the Organizational Communication Program Director.
- Please see the PFS 898 Capstone Degree Completion Options document (Appendix A) for more detailed information.

How to Access Previous Year's Catalog & Why

Older editions of the KU Catalog are available via the link at the top of the current KU Catalog website. Here is the link to the Catalog Archives page: [Archived Catalogs | The University of Kansas Academic Catalog](#). The degree requirements for a student to graduate from a program are based on the Catalog year in which the student first enrolled in the program, unless they have opted in to a later Catalog year. The main KU Catalog webpage changes each year, typically in April, to reflect the revised Catalog for the following academic year. So, for a student to be able to review the degree requirements for their Catalog year, they need to look at the appropriate archived Catalog at the link above.

Catalog Overrides This Document Statement

Degree requirements as defined under the KU Catalog in the year in which a student began their program are the requirements that must be satisfied to graduate, unless the student has officially adopted the degree requirements in a later KU Catalog edition by working with their Jayhawk Academic Advisor. A student cannot adopt the degree requirements in an older catalog year than their current degree requirements. So, if a student started the program under the 2024-2025 KU Catalog program and then adopted the 2025-2026 KU Catalog degree requirements through their advisor, they would no longer be able to revert to the 2024-2025 KU Catalog degree requirements.

Professional Development

Graduate students in the Organizational Communication programs are encouraged to take an active role in their professional development throughout their course of study. Because these programs are professionally oriented and serve many working professionals, students should regularly reflect on their career goals, skill development needs, and opportunities to connect course learning with workplace practice. Students are encouraged to select electives, course projects, and capstone topics that align with their professional goals and allow them to develop applied communication, leadership, management, and organizational effectiveness skills.

Students are also encouraged to build a professional portfolio that demonstrates their learning and applied competencies. This portfolio may include course projects, training materials, presentations, research proposals, workplace communication plans, executive summaries, reflective writing, and capstone materials. These artifacts can help students communicate their skills to current or future employers and demonstrate growth across the program.

KU offers several resources that can support student professional development. Students are encouraged to explore programming connected to the [Center for Workplace Excellence](#), which focuses on professional development, workplace training, consulting, coaching, and organizational improvement. Students may also benefit from [KU's Professional Edge sessions](#), which provide free professional development webinars on timely workplace topics. In addition, students are encouraged to use KU resources such as the [University Career Center](#), graduate career services, Handshake, career advising, mock interview support, resume and LinkedIn assistance, and the [Wingspan Writing Center](#) for writing consultations and graduate writing support.

Students are also encouraged, but not required, to participate in academic or professional conferences, webinars, association events, and networking opportunities related to communication, leadership, management, training, human resources, project management, and organizational development. Presenting at an academic or professional conference can be a valuable way to extend a course project or capstone experience, but conference participation is not required for successful completion of the program.

Relevant External Associations

Students may find it useful to explore academic, professional, and Kansas City-area associations related to communication, leadership, management, training, and organizational effectiveness. These organizations may provide opportunities for networking, professional development, conferences, publications, job postings, and continued learning.

- **National Communication Association (NCA):** NCA is a national scholarly and professional association focused on advancing the study, teaching, and practice of communication.
 - Website: <https://www.natcom.org/>
- **Eastern Communication Association (ECA):** ECA is a regional academic association for communication scholars, teachers, students, and professionals, and is the oldest professional communication association in the United States.
 - Website: <https://www.ecasite.org/>
- **Central States Communication Association (CSCA):** CSCA is a regional communication association that supports scholarship, teaching, networking, and professional development across the central region of the United States.
 - Website: <https://www.cscs-net.org/>
- **International Association of Business Communicators (IABC):** IABC is a professional association for communication professionals interested in business communication, internal communication, strategic communication, and communication leadership.
 - Website: <https://www.iabc.com/>
- **Public Relations Society of America (PRSA):** PRSA is a professional organization for public relations and communication professionals, offering networking, professional development, accreditation, and career resources.
 - Website: <https://www.prsa.org/>
- **Association for Talent Development – Kansas City (ATD Kansas City):** ATD Kansas City provides local networking, professional development, certification support, and learning opportunities

for professionals interested in training, talent development, workplace learning, and organizational development.

- Website: <https://www.tdkc.org/>
- **Project Management Institute – KC Mid-America Chapter (PMI KC):** PMI KC supports project management professionals in the Kansas City region through events, networking, professional development, certification resources, and volunteer opportunities.
 - Website: <https://pmikc.org/>

SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES GENERAL ACADEMIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

School of Professional Studies History

KU created the [KU School of Professional Studies](#) (SPS) in December 2019 to focus on innovation and serving adult learners with timely, relevant, workforce-oriented education. The school is based at the [KU Edwards Campus in Overland Park](#).

For nearly 30 years, the Edwards Campus has been a KU presence in Kansas City, offering in-demand programs to meet the talent needs of employers in the metropolitan area, across the country, and around the world. SPS facilitates social mobility and equity by providing high-quality academic programs, research activities, and engaged learning initiatives.

The KU School of Professional Studies offers in-person, hybrid, and online programs in a wide variety of [disciplines](#), including our [Organizational Communication](#) programs. It also provides tailored undergraduate- and graduate-level services to meet the needs of diverse students who may work full-time, have considerable commitments outside of the classroom, have prior college-level education, or otherwise need a different approach to earning academic credentials. Non-credit education programs related to our Organizational Communication programs are offered through the [SPS Center for Workplace Excellence](#).

School of Professional Studies Directory

Directory of School Administrators

<u>Role</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Office Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
Dean, School of Professional Studies and Vice Provost, Edwards Campus	Stuart Day	913-897-8400	day@ku.edu
Associate Dean/Director of Graduate Studies	John Bricklemeyer	913-897-8634	jtbrick@ku.edu
Associate Dean/Director of Undergraduate Studies	Amy Neufeld	913-897-8552	aneufeld@ku.edu
Assistant Dean	Dannah Hartley	913-897-8628	dhartley@ku.edu

Associate Director for Admissions and Enrollment	Deb Carter	913-897-8583	deb.carter28@ku.edu
Student Program Manager - Retention	Jennifer Keleher	913-897-8635	jkeleher-price@ku.edu

Who to Ask Chart:

Chart identifying who to ask for certain questions

School Processes:	Role Responsible for Process Oversight
Admissions to graduate programs	Associate Director for Admissions and Enrollment
Graduate policies	Director of Graduate Studies
Grievances	Dean
Student petition status & processing	Assistant Dean
Unfair grading	Director of Graduate Studies

Admission

Admission requirements for each graduate program in Organizational Communication can be found in the KU Catalog at the following links:

- [Master of Arts in Organizational Communication | The University of Kansas Academic Catalog](#)
- [Graduate Certificate in Professional Workplace Communication | The University of Kansas Academic Catalog](#)
- [Graduate Certificate in Professional Management | The University of Kansas Academic Catalog](#)

Requirements for non-native speakers of English

Non-native English speakers must also provide proof of English proficiency. Please refer to [KU English Proficiency Requirements](#) for specific score requirements.

Minimum requirements or prerequisites

The minimum requirements for admission to each program are specified on the Admissions tab in the KU Catalog section for each program.

- M.A. in Organizational Communication: [Master of Arts in Organizational Communication | The University of Kansas Academic Catalog](#)
- Graduate Certificate in Professional Workplace Communication: [Graduate Certificate in Professional Workplace Communication | The University of Kansas Academic Catalog](#)

- Graduate Certificate in Professional Management: [Graduate Certificate in Professional Management | The University of Kansas Academic Catalog](#)

Deadlines

Graduate programs in Organizational Communication admit students every Fall, Spring, and Summer term. These programs have a priority deadline and a final deadline.

Additional information and deadlines are available on the [KU Graduate Admissions webpage](#).

Other important dates are available on the [KU Academic Calendar](#).

Enrollment

General Enrollment Information

Jayhawk Academic Advisors, in collaboration with the School of Professional Studies, build strong relationships and tailor support to each student's unique needs, guiding them from enrollment in the first semester, enrollment in subsequent semesters, and ultimately to apply for graduation.

Course specific enrollment needs, such as permission numbers or questions about pre-requisites, are supported by Jayhawk Academic Advising. Academic Advisors also guide student in exploring and navigating changes to their enrollment status such as beginning or returning from a Leave of Absence.

Information regarding schedule changes can be found at the Office of the University Registrar page on [Schedule Changes](#).

Specific information about enrollment for graduate programs in Organizational Communication was outlined earlier in the document.

Changes in Enrollment / Late Enrollment

- Information regarding schedule changes can be found at the Office of the University Registrar page on [Schedule Changes](#).

Academic Integrity & Misconduct

Information regarding academic integrity and misconduct, probation, and dismissal can be found in the KU Catalog under the [School of Professional Studies Graduate Regulations](#).

Good Academic Standing

To be in good academic standing, a student must maintain a 3.0 cumulative grade-point average and be making satisfactory progress toward the degree. Additional information can be found in the [graduate regulations](#) section of the catalog.

Additional UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS are outlined in a later section of the handbook.

Minimum Grade Requirements for Graduate Courses

Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs' [grading policy](#) establishes a minimum grade of C or higher for a course to count for graduate credit. Departments should clearly outline requirements, the courses the requirements apply to, and the consequences that apply if the student receives a lower grade in one or more courses (e.g., falling out of good academic standing, requirements for retaking the course). Students must be in Good Academic Standing (must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0) to graduate from all graduate programs in the School of Professional Studies.

Incomplete Grades

As stated in the University Senate Rules & Regulations Section 2.3.3, the letter I shall indicate incomplete work, such as may be completed without re-enrollment in the course. The School of Professional Studies requires that a student has completed at least 50% of the assignments in a course before issuing an incomplete grade. Coursework must be completed by the date indicated on the incomplete contract agreed upon by the faculty and student – this date must be within 12 months of the end of the semester of the course. If an “I” is not changed to a letter grade by the instructor within this timeframe, the grade will automatically convert to the lapse grade assigned by the course instructor at the conclusion of the semester of enrollment. The instructor has the discretion to apply additional guidelines. When an incomplete is initiated, the student and the instructor must complete a [School of Professional Studies Incomplete Grade Form](#).

Student Progression

The School of Professional Studies works closely with Jayhawk Academic Advising to coordinate a regular evaluation of student progression. This is informed by student grades, semesterly student meetings with academic advisors, and input from academic program leaders and faculty.

Grievance Procedures

The procedure for filing a student or faculty grievance is defined in the [School of Professional Studies Grievance Procedures](#). For disputes involving alleged academic misconduct, see the [School of Professional Studies Student Academic Misconduct Procedures](#).

Petitions

Information regarding student course-related petitions can be found on the [School of Professional Studies Resources](#) website.

Advising, Mentoring, and Communication of Assignments & Roles

Jayhawk Academic Advising provides professional advising resources for all students in graduate programs in the School of Professional Studies. Students are encouraged to establish an effective advising relationship with their Jayhawk Academic Advisor, which is perhaps the most important factor in supporting successful degree progression. Working with your Advisor to establish a degree plan will help ensure you complete your degree requirements on time.

Students are also encouraged to establish relationships with the faculty in their program, including the Program Director. Establishing meaningful relationships with faculty members and the Program Director is vital to success in the Organizational Communication and related certificate programs. Faculty bring both academic expertise and practical industry experience, making them valuable mentors who can help students deepen their understanding of complex topics, connect

theory to practice, and navigate emerging trends in the field. By engaging with faculty through class discussions, office hours, and collaborative projects, students gain personalized guidance on academic performance, career planning, and skill development. These relationships can also lead to opportunities for research collaboration, independent study, or involvement in applied projects that enhance a student's professional portfolio.

Similarly, building a connection with the Program Director provides students with broader insight into the program's structure, expectations, and strategic direction. The Program Director can serve as an important advocate and resource, helping students align their academic choices with long-term professional goals, identify leadership or experiential learning opportunities, and address challenges that may arise during their studies. For working professionals in a course-based program, these relationships are especially important, as they foster a supportive academic network that complements workplace experience. Strong engagement with faculty and program leadership ultimately enriches the graduate experience and helps position students for continued growth and advancement in their profession.

Information for Graduate Assistants (GA)

General Information for Graduate Assistants in the School of Professional Studies

The School of Professional Studies employs graduate assistants to support the specific needs of academic programs.

Graduate Assistants are provided with

- Access to resources (e.g., desk, computer, office space, printer, copier, mailboxes) and an on-campus work space, if needed.
- Link to instructions for viewing their pay stubs
- Elevating concerns and who to contact about their appointment, for example:
 - Supervisor – Questions about duties (e.g., research, course delivery, syllabi, concerns about workload, evaluations)
 - Office Manager – Keys, office space, student evaluations (undergraduate), return of student assignments after grading
- Expectations of the student, including, but not limited to: scope of work, expected outcomes, and time commitment.
- Mentorship, collaboration, and supervision that the student should expect to receive from their supervisor
- Procedures for regular communication between the graduate student and faculty advisor to ensure that the student is benefiting from the GA appointment
- Information on opportunities for cross-disciplinary professional development (e.g., opportunities for cross-disciplinary training, travel to professional meetings, or collaborations with outside investigators)
- Conditions and procedures for reappointment

Where to Find Textbook Information

Information regarding textbooks for specific courses can be found on the University of Kansas Bookstore website under [Find Your Textbooks](#). The department code for Organizational

Communication courses is **PFS**. Please also refer to the course syllabus in Canvas for specific information regarding textbook requirements in a course.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

This section contains information on requirements and policies of the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs, hereafter referred to as “the University”. It is not a complete list of all policies pertaining to graduate students. Only those policies that *most commonly* affect graduate students are included. Policies are described in general terms and are intended to help students understand what is expected. They do not reflect the exact language of the official policy and should not be confused with official policy. Specific information and restrictions as well as links to relevant forms may be accessed by clicking on the policy headings. Links to the official policies in the KU policy library are found at the bottom of each policy description. Students are accountable to and should familiarize themselves with the University's official policies.

General Policies

The following University policies apply to ALL graduate students regardless of degree, program, or department. These are minimum general requirements. Your department or program may have more restrictive policies in any of these areas.

Admission

Degree or non-degree seeking applicants must have a bachelor's degree (as evidenced by an official transcript from the institution the degree was obtained).

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Admission to Graduate Study](#)

English Proficiency Requirements

The University requires all applicants, international or domestic, to demonstrate English proficiency for admission to any graduate program at KU. There are multiple ways to prove English proficiency:

- Declaration of native or native-like speaker status on the online application for graduate study.
- Official scores from an English proficiency standardized test (e.g., TOEFL, IELTS-Academic, or PTE), sent by the testing agency to the University of Kansas. Official scores must be less than two years old. Scores must be reported to KU directly by the testing service. Self-reported scores or unofficial scores are not accepted. TOEFL scores should be sent by ETS to KU institution code 6871. IELTS should be sent to KU Graduate Admissions via the e-delivery service. PTE score sheets containing the Score Report Code and Registration ID should be emailed to graduateadm@ku.edu for verification.
- Graduation with a baccalaureate degree (or higher) earned in residence from an accredited English-medium college or university or an accredited college or university in the United States. Degrees earned online may not be used to verify English proficiency. Note: this option is not sufficient for employment as a Graduate Teaching Assistant.
- AEC Curriculum: Students who haven't taken one of the listed tests may complete coursework through the KU [Applied English Center](#) (AEC) to demonstrate English proficiency.

- US Military Employment: If you are employed as an officer in the U.S. military with documentation of selection or promotion to the rank of Major or higher (or the equivalent U.S. Navy or Coast Guard rank), then you will be considered fully proficient and will not be required to complete AEC testing.

Additional English Competency Requirements for GTAs:

English proficiency requirements for GTAs are governed by the Kansas Board of Regents and must be met separately from the English proficiency requirement for admission to a KU graduate program. Detailed information on English proficiency requirements for GTAs may be found on Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs' [Spoken English Competency page](#).

Related Policies and Forms:

- [English Proficiency Requirements for Admission to Graduate Study](#)
- [Spoken English Language Competency of Faculty and Graduate Teaching Assistants, Kansas Board of Regents Policy](#)

Enrollment

For graduate students, advising on enrollment and course selection take place at the department level. While individual units may have additional enrollment requirements, for students who are required to enroll full-time (e.g., students holding a GTA/GRA/GA appointment, international students on an F-1 or J-1 visa, students receiving federal financial aid, etc.) the University defines full-time enrollment as follows:

Fall and Spring semesters:

- Enrollment in 9 credit hours;
- Enrollment in 6 credit hours plus a GTA, GRA, or GA appointment, regardless of percentage of appointment;
- Enrollment in 6 credit hours for graduate students using the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MGIB-AD) and Post-9/11 GI Bill – Active Duty;
- Doctoral candidates enrolled in dissertation hour(s). *See Doctoral post-comprehensive enrollment.
- Enrollment in 6 competencies for students in a Competency-Based Education (CBE) program

Summer sessions:

- Enrollment in 6 credit hours;
- Enrollment in 3 credit hours plus a GTA, GRA, or GA appointment, regardless of percentage of appointment;
- Enrollment in 3 credit hours for graduate students using the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MGIB-AD) and Post-9/11 GI Bill – Active Duty;
- Doctoral candidates enrolled in dissertation hour(s).
- Enrollment in 6 competencies for students in a CBE program

Graduate students are not normally permitted to enroll for more than 16 hours a semester or more than 8 hours in summer session.

While these are KU's definitions of full-time enrollment, other institutions may have different definitions. Be sure to consult with your financial aid and/or health insurance providers before making enrollment decisions.

Students not enrolled by 11:59 pm the day before the first day of classes will be assessed a late enrollment fee. The University Registrar then deactivates the KU ID of any student not enrolled by the last Friday in October (for Fall) or the last Friday in March (for Spring). Students who wish to enroll after that must submit a [Permit to Re-Enroll](#) to be reactivated.

Students who wish to leave their graduate program should inform the department of such plans in writing so that a Voluntary Withdrawal form may be submitted on their behalf. Please note that voluntarily withdrawing from your program does **not** automatically withdraw you from coursework. You must also withdraw from all classes in Enroll & Pay via the "Withdraw from the University" option. Deadlines for adding, changing, dropping, or withdrawing from all courses, as well any fines associated with the change, are set by the University. **Deadlines vary from year to year. Students should carefully review the current [Academic Calendar](#).**

You may also wish to consult the Registrar's page on [Effects of Dropping or Withdrawing on your Transcript](#).

Your graduate program coordinator (or similar title) is available to guide you through any enrollment scenarios or questions that come up. To avoid problems on your record, please consult with them prior to dropping or changing enrollment.

Related Policies:

- [Discontinued Enrollment](#)
- [Enrollment](#)
- [Full-time Enrollment for Graduate Students](#)
- [Graduate Coursework Expiration Dates](#)
- [Master's Degree Requirements](#)

Graduate Credit (Including Transfer Credit)

The University's Graduate Credit [policy](#) defines KU's conditions for the following:

- Definition of graduate credit for the purposes of a course "counting" towards a graduate degree or graduate certificate at KU;
- Transfer of graduate credit to KU from an outside institution;
- Reduction in the required number of graduate hours for Master's students;
- Counting credit hours taken as non-degree seeking student towards a later graduate degree at KU;
- Counting credit hours taken as a certificate seeking student toward another graduate degree.

Transfer Credit

The transfer credit option allows master's students to add graduate-level coursework completed at another institution to their KU transcript to count toward their KU degree. Upper-level coursework taken as an undergraduate, even courses numbered at the graduate level, is not eligible for transfer in any case. Additional restrictions apply to what non-KU graduate courses and the number of credit hours

that can be counted toward a KU master's degree, so students should carefully review the information provided in the link above and the related policies below, as well as consulting with their DGS. In all cases, transfer credit must first be approved at the department or program level. To begin the transfer process, students should consult with their DGS to submit the required transfer materials. These include a transcript reflecting the courses to be transferred and descriptions and/or syllabi for the courses in question.

No transfer of credits is allowed for the Ph.D. In circumstances where students enter the Ph.D. program with an M.A. from another institution or other relevant graduate coursework, it may be possible for students to request a reduction in the number of hours required for the Ph.D. Students should consult with their DGS about their enrollment plan.

Reduced Credit Hour Degree

KU policy defines 30 hours as the minimum for master's degrees. Departments may petition for a reduced hour degree master's degree for individual students in cases where they may provide evidence that the student entered the program especially well-prepared to complete a graduate-level degree and the student is able to maintain a superior grade point average. Reduced credit hour degrees must be based on coursework or experiences that can be objectively measured, such as coursework or qualifying internship or study abroad programs. Professional or life experience does not qualify.

A reduction in hours is distinct from a transfer of credit and is reserved for students whose prior coursework doesn't qualify for transfer credit (e.g. was already used to fulfill requirements towards a completed degree) and there are no modifications on the transcript.

Restrictions apply to the number of credit hours that can be reduced for a master's degree, so students should carefully review the information provided in the link above and the related policies below. In all cases, a reduction in hours must first be approved at the department or program level, so to begin the process for approval, students should consult with their DGS. Students must also provide documentation of the coursework or experience being used to justify the reduced hours (e.g. transcripts, program descriptions).

Because there is no minimum number of required hours for the Ph.D., reduction of required hours based on prior degrees or experience is determined solely at the program level. Doctoral students should consult with their DGS about their enrollment plan.

Related Policies:

- [Graduate Credit](#)
- [Co-enrollment](#)
- [Master's Degree Requirements](#) (on Reduced Hour Master's Degree)

Credit/No Credit

The University supports and encourages interdisciplinary study, which may include graduate students enrolling in coursework at the graduate level that is outside of their primary discipline. The Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) is an option for graduate students who are taking a course that is not required for their degree or certificate and who do not wish to have the course grade reflected in

their cumulative graduate GPA. Rather than a grade appearing on the transcript, the student receives a designation of CR or NC, which does not factor in the GPA.

No course graded CR/NC will count toward the satisfaction of any graduate degree or certificate requirement. This includes, but is not limited to, courses taken to fulfill the Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship requirement for doctoral students.

Students make the CR/NC election via the Registrar's CR/NC [online request](#) form. Elections and changes to elections can only be made during the specific CR/NC period. For regular semester courses, this period begins after the last day to add a class and extends for approximately two weeks. Exact dates may be found in the current KU [Academic Calendar](#). Please keep in mind, short courses may have [alternate dates](#).

The student should consult with their own program advisor about the appropriateness of the course prior to enrolling; however, in cases where CR/NC is elected, the course instructor is not informed of the election unless the student chooses to share this information.

Additional restrictions apply. Students should carefully review the information in the link above.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [University Senate Rules and Regulations \(USRR\), Section 2.3.8](#)

Probation & Dismissal

Probation is an academic status that can be assigned to a graduate student that is not making [satisfactory progress](#) toward completing their degree. The department initiates the probation process and will inform the student of why they are not making satisfactory progress, what they must do to return to good standing, and the deadline for doing so.

Students are most commonly placed on probation due to their graduate cumulative [GPA](#) dropping below a B average (3.0 on a 4.0 scale). In these cases, probation occurs automatically and is reflected on the student's record for the semester following the semester in which the student's GPA drops below 3.0. If the student's cumulative GPA is raised to 3.0 by the end of the probationary semester, the student will be automatically returned to good academic standing.

Individual Schools/the College may set more stringent GPA requirements.

Students may also be placed on probation by their departments for other reasons that constituting a failure to make satisfactory progress towards degree. These may include, but are not limited to;

- Lack of progress on the thesis, dissertation, or capstone project
 - Unacceptable academic performance on program milestones outside of coursework (e.g. exams)
 - Unsatisfactory grades or GPA within foundational required courses (despite the overall cumulative GPA)
 - An unsatisfactory result in their department's annual progress evaluation
- Nearing or going beyond their maximum time to degree. See the Time Limits section below for more information.

Students should carefully review the [Good Academic Standing policy](#) for graduate students at KU for more information on what constitutes making satisfactory academic progress. Individual programs may also have additional measures of progress. Students should also consult the Annual Review section of their department graduate handbook or the degree requirements section and with their program advisor for more information.

If a student is unable to raise their cumulative GPA or otherwise meet the communicated terms of the academic probation, the department will reconsider their continuation in the program, and in most cases will recommend the student for dismissal. Once dismissed, a student is no longer able to be enrolled in coursework and cannot complete their degree. Students dismissed from any graduate program may not be admitted to any other graduate program at the University of Kansas.

A student on probation or facing dismissal should discuss their status with their advisor.

Related Policies:

- [Academic Probation](#)
- [Dismissed Enrollment](#)
- [Good Academic Standing policy](#)

Grading

The Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs' (GPA) [Grading policy](#) governs requirements for the grading of graduate students above those described in [Article II](#) of the University Senate Rules and Regulations. Additionally, individual schools, departments, or programs may have grading policies that are more stringent than those of GPA.

Students should also consult their advisor and the departmental grading section of this handbook for additional information that may affect them.

At minimum, for all graduate students at KU, at least a B average is required on course work counted toward any of the master's degrees at KU, and only courses graded A, B, or C (excluding C-) may be counted. Course work counted toward a doctorate, including that for a master's degree if obtained at KU, should average better than a B.

Related Policies:

- [University Senate Rules & Regulations](#)
- [Grading](#)
- [Academic Probation](#)
- [Dismissed Enrollment](#)

Time Limits

The University expects that master's degree should typically be completed in two (2) years of full-time study, the doctorate degree in five (5) years of study, and both the master's and doctorate together in six-seven (6-7) years of study.

Students who anticipate exceeding these targets should review the information in the policies below, as well as consult with their program advisor to create a timeline for degree completion. In order

to support this process, students are encouraged to use a Mentoring Agreement Template and/or adapt to their own needs to support effective mentoring and a positive mentoring relationship.

Note that individual schools/the College/degree programs may require Mentoring Agreements for students who are nearing their maximum time to degree.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Master's Degree Program Time Constraints](#)
- [Engagement and Enrollment in Doctoral Programs](#)
- [Doctoral Degree Comprehensive Oral Exams](#) (on exam expiration and recertification)
- [Doctoral Program Profiles with Time to Degree Information](#)
- [KU CLAS Mentorship Agreement Template](#)
- [Univ. Michigan Rackham Graduate School Mentoring Plan Templates](#)
- [KU Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs IDP template](#)

Leave of Absence

In exceptional circumstances (e.g., cases of illness, emergency, financial hardship, military leave, to pursue family responsibilities, or to pursue full-time activities related to long-range professional goals) it may be necessary for graduate students to take a break from their program temporarily, without having to withdraw entirely from the program. An approved leave of absence allows a student to take a temporary break from enrolling in graduate coursework while remaining in good standing with the University and the department and while “stopping the clock” on their time to degree. When a student is on Leave of Absence status, it is understood that they have temporarily suspended their graduate work and therefore will not make use of University resources, including faculty time.

Requesting a Leave of Absence is done through a University petition. University petitions must first be approved and supported at the program level, so students wishing to initiate the petition process should first consult with their Director of Graduate Studies and review their department’s internal petition procedures. Units or the Director of Graduate Study may request documentation to support the student’s need for a leave of absence.

For a Leave of Absence to be approved, the student must be withdrawn from all active and/or future enrollment. Withdrawal for the purposes of Leave of Absence is still subject to all Registrar deadlines, required forms, and applicable tuition and fees.

Students on Leave of Absence are automatically reactivated after their leave is over and are eligible to enroll for their intended semester back during the normal enrollment periods. See the KU [Academic Calendar](#) for exact dates that enrollment begins.

If at any time plans change and a student wishes to return and enroll before leave is supposed to end, they may contact their department to be reactivated early.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Leaves of Absence](#)

Required University Milestones

All graduate students must complete one or more exams as part of their degree requirements. In addition to department or program guidelines, the following milestones are required for all students and specific regulations apply:

- Master's Final Culminating Exam (written or oral)/Thesis Defense for Master's degree
- Doctoral Comprehensive Oral Exam
- Doctoral Final Exam/Dissertation Defense

*A final culminating effort is not required for departments with an approved coursework-only master's degree option in the Academic Catalog (note that programs with a capstone are considered coursework only).

Before a student is allowed to complete any of these three exams, pre-approval from the school/College is required in advance of the exam date. This pre-approval request will be submitted on the student's behalf by their department after the exam date has been scheduled. The school/College reviews the student record and verifies all University requirements have been fulfilled. The full list of these requirements may be found via the link in the heading above. Students should work with their departments well in advance of their planned exam date, to schedule their exams in a timely fashion and to ensure that all University policies relating to oral exams are being followed.

There are additional policies requirements for oral exams. The following are University policies pertaining to oral exams:

Oral Exam Committee Composition

All voting committee members must be appointed members of the Graduate Faculty of KU. Additionally, a majority of committee members serving on a graduate student oral examination committee must be tenured/tenure-track faculty in the candidate's department or program of study.

Many additional restrictions apply, especially for doctoral exam committees. Master's and doctoral students should carefully review the University policies pertaining to exams, as well as consult with their Director of Graduate Studies when forming an exam committee. Your graduate program coordinator can assist with confirming the qualifying status of any faculty member at KU, or outside of KU.

Oral Exam Attendance

Oral Exams may be conducted in-person, remotely, or a hybrid of both. There are no University level requirements for physical presence; however, there are strict regulations on participation. In all cases, all committee members must be present, either physically or via phone/video conference, for an exam to commence. **If a committee member does not arrive or appear, the exam may not begin and if a committee member leaves or loses connection such that they cannot fully participate, the exam may not proceed. Oral examinations that do not meet these attendance requirements are not valid.**

Master's and doctoral students should carefully review the policies below, as well as consult with their Director of Graduate Studies in the formation of an oral exam committee.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Master's Student Oral Exam Committee Composition](#)
- [Doctoral Student Oral Exam Committee Composition](#)
- [Oral Exam Attendance](#)
- [Graduate Faculty Appointments](#)

Graduate Certificate Requirements

The University offers a variety of [Approved Graduate Certificate Programs](#) to encourage current graduate students to pursue interdisciplinary study, gain a credential for expertise in an outside area of study, or provide an option for a coherent course of advanced study for those not ready to commit to a full degree program. Note that students must be fully admitted to a graduate certificate by the end of the last course that will count to fulfill the certificate. Students wishing to complete the certificate should apply as early as possible. Students whose interests or career goals may be served by a Graduate Certificate should familiarize themselves with the University's policies relating to Certificate programs (found below) early in their graduate career, in addition to individual certificate requirements.

Related Policies and Forms

- [Graduate Certificate Programs: Eligibility and Admission Criteria](#)
- [Policies & Procedures for Graduate Certificate Programs](#)

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (Master's)

In addition to all program requirements, students [planning to graduate](#) must complete all University graduation requirements **prior to the published Graduation Deadline** in a given semester. Students should consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for the published Graduation Deadline, which varies by semester.

Graduate Graduation Checklists (Master's)

These graduation checklists provide a comprehensive list of all University requirements for graduation and should be consulted by every graduating master's or doctoral student as soon as graduation is expected. Submission of the final draft of the thesis or dissertation is done electronically. Students must comply with all University requirements for [formatting](#) and [electronic submission](#) of the thesis or dissertation. There is no University requirement that students provide a bound or printed copy of the draft.

We strongly encourage students to submit an Application for Graduation as early as possible; ideally prior to the 20th day of classes of the semester they intend to graduate.

Graduate Studies Funding Opportunities

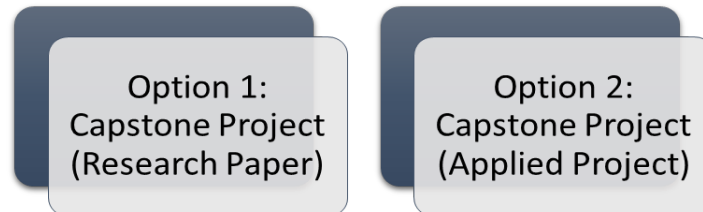
The Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs (GPA) offers funding opportunities in several different categories. Students interested in applying should direct inquiries to the department's Director of Graduate Studies or to GPA. Some of the available funding include:

Summer Research Scholarships: intended primarily for post-comp doctoral students.

Graduate Student Travel Fund: intended for graduate students presenting a paper at a national or regional meeting of a learned or professional society. A student may receive an award (max \$750) only once per academic year, with priority given to students who have not received the fund previously. Funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Organizational Communication MA Degree Completion Options

Near the conclusion of the MA degree in Organizational Communication, students will consult with the program faculty to determine their preferred path for degree completion. Students will choose one of the two options listed below.



Option 1: Capstone Project (Research Paper)

- Students can either (a) enroll in 3 credit hours of PFS 898 in the semester that they plan to complete their capstone project, **OR** (b) enroll in 1 credit hour of PFS 898 in the semester before they plan to complete their capstone project and then enroll in 2 credit hours of PFS 898 in the semester they plan to complete their capstone project.
- The Capstone Project (Research Paper) option should be selected if the student wants to conduct original research on a selected Organizational Communication topic.
- Students selecting this option will meet with the course instructor on a regular basis via Zoom for ongoing project mentorship.
- This project involves the development of a full research paper, which includes an introduction, literature review, methodology, results, and conclusion.
- This project can utilize qualitative research methods (e.g., interviews, focus groups, observation, content analysis), quantitative research methods (e.g., surveys or experiments), or a combination.
- The final product will be a paper that ranges from 18 to 25 pages not including sources or appendices.
- Upon completion, the student will orally present the project to the instructor of the class and the Organizational Communication Program Director.

Option 2: Capstone Project (Applied Project)

- Students can either (a) enroll in 3 credit hours of PFS 898 in the semester that they plan to complete their capstone project, **OR** (b) enroll in 1 credit hour of PFS 898 in the semester before they plan to complete their capstone project and then enroll in 2 credit hours of PFS 898 in the semester they plan to complete their capstone project.
- The Capstone Project (Applied Project) option should be selected if the student wants to develop a professionally-oriented program using an Organizational Communication topic. This

program can be an onboarding program, a workplace training or professional development session, or building a class on a selected topic.

- Examples of recent Applied Projects include building an onboarding program for new employees, an intercultural communication diversity training for employees, and a professional transition/preparation program for student-athletes.
- Students selecting this option will meet with the course instructor on a regular basis via Zoom for ongoing project mentorship.
- This project involves the development of a short research paper or manual, as well as the project materials (e.g., PowerPoints, video recordings, or webpage).
- The final product will be a paper or a manual that ranges from 8 to 10 pages (not including sources or appendices) and any project materials.
- Upon completion, the student will orally present the project to the instructor of the class and the Organizational Communication Program Director.