

## **The Master of Science, M.S. – thesis-based or M.S. – Professional Studies (MPS) Life Sciences Communication**

### **Semester One:**

- Plan your coursework for your Master of Science and have it approved by your advisor. You need to do this every semester. Thesis-based degrees require 21 credits of coursework plus 3 LSC 990 thesis credits. Professional studies degrees require 30 credits of coursework, no thesis.

### **Semester Two:**

- Check in with your advisor regarding your progress and any intended changes to your course plan.
- If you are doing a thesis option, 24 credit plan, start discussing your research ideas with your advisor and form a three-person committee made up of your advisor and two additional faculty members.

### **Semester Three and Four:**

- Check in with your advisor regarding your progress and any intended changes to your course plan.
- If you are doing a thesis option, firm up your thesis idea with your advisor. Once you have or will have completed 21 credits of class work, enroll for three credits of thesis research (LSC 990) with your advisor.
- If you are doing the professional option (MPS/30 credits/no thesis), complete 30 credits of class work in consultation with your advisor.
- If you will have completed your requirements by the end of the semester, notify the student services coordinator who will request a MS warrant for the end of that semester.
- In your final semester, plan well ahead with your advisor to schedule a thesis defense date, or (if MPS option) a course narrative defense date.
- Work backwards from your defense date to plan earlier deadlines, such as dates for submitting a first draft of your thesis to your advisor (remember to allow time for your advisor to give feedback and for you to do revisions) and the date for delivering final drafts to the committee (usually at least 14 days before defense date). If you are pursuing the MPS option, distribute copies of your coursework narrative to all committee members 14 days before the defense. See the student services coordinator for examples.

***\*Your Student Services Coordinator (SSC) will send an email at the start of every semester requesting students to declare their intentions to achieve major milestones (thesis defense, graduation) during the current semester. Stating your intentions to achieve a milestone does not mean you have to adhere to these intentions, however, it is necessary so your SSC can send you detailed instructions necessary to reach the milestone. It is critical that you pay close attention to these directions to avoid any logistical errors in the preparation for the milestone, e.g. all warrants to signal a milestone must be sent to the Graduate School a minimum of three weeks prior to key dates.***