

The Master of Science (MS) Life Sciences Communication

Semester One:

- Plan your coursework for your Master of Science (MS) and have it approved by your advisor. You need to do this **every** semester.
- If you completed graduate-level coursework at another institution and would like course credits to count toward your degree, you should submit a request, along with supporting documentation (i.e., a course syllabus from the other university), to the Director of Graduate Studies.
- All MS students are required to complete a communication theory course (typically LSC 720), a research methods course and a statistics course. These courses should be taken during the first and second semesters of a student's program. Students should contact their academic advisor about specific courses that satisfy these requirements. If a methods course is not offered by any social science department on campus in a particular semester, a student may be allowed to fulfill this degree requirement with three credits of independent study focusing on research methodology. Discuss your options with your academic advisor
- All coursework must be graded, with one exception: MS students may take the department's colloquium course, LSC 700, on a pass/fail basis.

Semester Two:

- Check in with your advisor regarding your progress and any intended changes to your course plan.
- In consultation with your advisor, form a three-person committee made up of your advisor and two other faculty members.
- If you're pursuing a thesis-based MS (24 credits, plus thesis), start discussing your research ideas with your academic advisor.

Semesters Three and Four:

- Check in with your advisor regarding your progress and any intended changes to your course plan.
- If you are pursuing a thesis-based MS, firm up your thesis topic with your advisor. Once you complete 21 credits of class work, enroll for three credits of thesis research (LSC 990) with your advisor. Write your thesis. Master's students who exceed a maximum of 30 course credits before defending their thesis, will not be eligible for the thesis-based MS. Instead, they will receive a non-thesis MS.

- If you are pursuing the non-thesis MS, complete 30 credits of class work in consultation with your advisor. Prepare a coursework narrative for your degree committee meeting. See the Student Services Coordinator for examples of this document.
- Contact your advisor and other degree committee members to schedule a meeting to defend your thesis (thesis-based MS) or present your coursework narrative (course-based MS).
- Notify the Student Services Coordinator **at least three weeks prior** to the meeting date, so she/he can submit a warrant request form. A warrant request form is a program's recommendation that a student be granted a Master's degree. Issuance of a degree warrant is the Graduate School's notification that a student has met the institution's degree requirements.
- 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 the defense date).
- If you're pursuing the non-thesis MS, distribute copies of your coursework narrative to all committee members 14 days before the meeting.
- Students who are completing a thesis-based MS program in LSC and wish to continue in the department's doctoral program must formally apply for admission through the LSC Graduate Committee. All application materials should be submitted to the Student Services Coordinator.