



GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK
2025-2026

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ORGANIZATION OF THE SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION

The chief administrative officer of the Annenberg School for Communication (ASC) is the Walter H. Annenberg Dean. Annenberg faculty members direct academic affairs; the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies supervises the doctoral program, the Associate Dean for Master's Programs oversees the master's program, and the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies supervises the undergraduate major. The Vice Dean helps strategize to build infrastructure that supports collaboration and cohesiveness across the school's various centers and research labs. The Vice Dean also assists in developing strategies for procuring different kinds of research funding for this new infrastructure.

Annenberg staff members oversee the school's administrative functions. The Director of the Graduate Program manages the development and coordination of the graduate programs. Questions regarding school policy, academic advising, student affairs, financial policies, and other issues should be addressed to the Director of the Graduate Program. The Registrar and Associate Director of Student Services, Undergraduate Studies, schedules and monitors courses and classroom assignments, and advises undergraduates. The ASC Business Office manages the school's financial operations. It processes student stipend payments and reimbursements, tracks student research and travel account balances, processes student research and travel expenses, and assists with general inquiries. The Senior Director of Library Services and Operations supervises the library's staff and operations. The Senior Director of Information Technology administers the school's computer resources. The Senior Building Administrator is responsible for the building, its contents, and related services. The Director of Events plans, implements, and manages school-supported functions, including student-led, on-campus events, conferences, and symposia.

STANDING FACULTY

Assistant Professors, Associate Professors, and Professors holding tenured or tenure-track full-time appointments in the ASC constitute the Standing Faculty. The Standing Faculty meets as stipulated in the University statutes. At these meetings, the voting faculty determines, consistent with university regulations, ASC requirements for admissions, rules for the instruction of students, requirements for recommendation for degrees, and qualifications for membership in the faculty. The Standing Faculty may, upon request or upon its own initiative, make recommendations to the Dean or other parties about matters outside of faculty jurisdiction. Operational advice on the execution of faculty policy about matters within its powers and any other business not requiring a meeting of the voting faculty shall be provided to the Dean by an elected Executive Committee of the Standing Faculty of the Annenberg School. The Dean convenes regularly scheduled meetings of the Executive Committee and other meetings as necessary.

The Dean appoints standing committees in consultation with the faculty and by University Statutes and ASC procedures, and comprises members of the Standing Faculty and others as a standing committee wishes to nominate for appointment by a majority vote of its regular members.

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

The Standing Faculty Committee on Graduate Studies enacts faculty policy on student admissions, financial awards, fellowships, assistantships, student academic progress and scholarship, academic grievances, and other matters as they relate to the Doctoral program. It is responsible for conducting the Comprehensive Exam and approving dissertation committees. Usually, the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies chairs the Graduate Studies Committee and serves as Graduate Group Chair for the doctoral program. The faculty elects committee members for the upcoming academic year in late June.

GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL

The Graduate Student Council comprises six members of the ASC graduate student body. The group's primary function is to represent the ASC student body, convey its interests, suggestions, and grievances to the faculty and staff, and foster a collegial atmosphere among students. The Graduate Student Council is also responsible for managing the Graduate Student Council budget in collaboration with the ASC Business Office.

All ASC graduate students can vote in elections and serve as Council members. Graduate Student Council terms are one year. Three students are elected in late September with terms beginning in October. At least one of these students must be an incoming first-year student. Three students are elected in late January to begin serving in February. Members of the graduate council must be students in [good standing](#) at the Annenberg School during the year of their term. They must be available to attend weekly meetings and various social events that the Graduate Student Council plans. Graduate Student Council members must be in Philadelphia during the academic year of their term, and while not required, it is strongly recommended that they be available during the summer.

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY: DEGREE REQUIREMENTS, GRADUATE RULES AND REGULATIONS

ADVISOR SELECTION

The primary role of the Academic Advisor is to help the student determine how to develop expertise in the field through courses and research. The Academic Advisor helps plan a course of study and research suitable to the student's needs in preparation for the comprehensive examination and dissertation, consistent with ASC and University general requirements.

The faculty assign a primary academic advisor to entering graduate students. Working together, the student and advisor will plan a course of study and research suitable to the student's needs in preparation for the comprehensive examination and dissertation. The advisor's primary role is to help the student determine how to develop expertise in the field through courses and research.

All first-year students must enroll in the faculty Proseminar (COMM 5000), a course designed to provide an opportunity for incoming students to become familiar with the ongoing research of the ASC standing faculty.

It is not uncommon for a student to change their advisor after the first year, and this is something the faculty accepts routinely. Students should come to an agreement with their new advisor and discuss the change with both their old and new advisor. The Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies should be notified via email, copying the Director, once a new advisor has been decided.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The courses at Annenberg leading to the Doctor of Philosophy degree require a program of active scholarship (coursework, research, and teaching) under faculty supervision, including a dissertation.

The minimum course requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy degree is 17 graduate course units (one course = one course unit), and a minimum of 11 course units must be completed at the University of Pennsylvania in courses approved for credit for the Ph.D.

The usual full-time load at Annenberg is three courses. With permission from their advisors, students may enroll in up to four courses in a term. The Annenberg School encourages students to take classes elsewhere at the University of Pennsylvania if they and their advisors believe the courses illuminate their specific programs of study.

GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING

Students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 to be considered in good academic standing and eligible for funding. The mark of S (Satisfactory) does not confer credit.

DESIGNING YOUR COURSE CURRICULUM

The ASC program is structured to provide flexibility for students, in regular consultation with their advisors, to design a personalized curriculum tailored to their specific interests. A well-chosen set of courses should provide students with a broad understanding of the field of communication, coupled with more in-depth knowledge of the theories, methods, and research findings most relevant to their area of specialization.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- **Core Requirements:** At least 11 credit-bearing courses, including the four required ones listed below.
 - COMM 5000: Proseminar
 - COMM 5220: Communication Research Methods
 - COMM 5230: Qualitative Ways of Knowing
 - Introduction to Statistics
 - EDUC 6667
 - PSCI 6800
 - PSYC 6110
 - SOCI 5350
 - STAT 5000
- **Distribution Requirement:** Students must complete five classes with five different Communication Graduate Group faculty members

- **COMM Electives:** select at least two COMM classes besides COMM 5000, 5220, and 5230.
- **Open Electives:** Six courses tailored to the individual student's needs. A combined number of:
 - Independent Research (with the faculty advisor's approval) can include working in labs, concentrated reading, or writing materials in preparation for the defense of the dissertation proposals or comprehensive exams (max 3)
 - Transfer Credit (max 4)
 - Courses Co-Taught with Annenberg Standing Faculty
 - University of Pennsylvania graduate courses that allow our students to also earn Penn certificates in:
 - [Africana Studies \(link is external\)](#) (5 courses and 1 seminar)
 - [Cinema Studies \(link is external\)](#) (4 seminars, 6 colloquia)
 - [Social, Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience \(link is external\)](#) (4 courses)
 - [Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies \(link is external\)](#) (4 seminars, 4 GSWS-sponsored activities, a paper, syllabus, or project description)
 - [Teaching Certificate \(link is external\)](#) Participants in the program participate in workshops and formal conversations about teaching and reflect on their teaching with a fellow from the Center for Teaching and Learning who has observed them in the classroom. The certificate contains four components:
 - Pedagogical Discussion and Training
 - Teaching Experience
 - Observation and Review
 - Teaching Philosophy

TRANSFER CREDIT

Requests for transfer credit are considered on a case-by-case basis. Students entering with a relevant master's degree or other graduate work may request permission to transfer up to four course units. All requests for transfer credit must be approved by the student's advisor and the Director of the Graduate Program, who may consult with the Committee on Graduate Studies. A master's thesis course may be transferred as an independent research project (COMM 7999), but it will not satisfy the research requirement. The student must use [Penn's External Transfer Credit tool, XCAT](#), to request transfer credit.

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH PROPOSAL or ADVANCED PROJECT IN A MEDIUM

Students may earn graduate credit for an independent research project. The proposal for independent research must contain an introduction, literature review, methods section, conclusion, and budget. The student's project supervisor and academic advisor must approve the proposal if they are not the same person. The proposal must be submitted with the appropriate form during the registration period for the term during which the work is to be done.

Students may earn one graduate credit per semester for an advanced project in a medium (ex., coding, multimedia work, survey development) AFTER completing the first year. If the student proposes that the project is worth more than one credit per semester, the student must petition the Graduate Studies Committee.

Proposals must be written [on the specified form](#) and approved by the student's project supervisor and academic advisor if they are not the same person. Students may take a maximum of three independent research courses.

NON-GRADUATE COURSES

Courses offered at levels other than the Ph.D. level (including undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, and certificate or special programs) do not count toward the Ph.D. The Annenberg School will not pay or reimburse tuition for such courses, whether offered by faculty within the Annenberg School or through other schools within the University of Pennsylvania. If circumstances arise requiring the student to complete a non-Ph.D. course to facilitate completion of the dissertation, the student should meet with the academic advisor to discuss a plan of action. Reimbursement of undergraduate tuition will only occur with explicit approval and permission from the academic advisor, the Director of the Graduate Program, the Annenberg Dean, and the Manager of Finance and Administration. Students should contact the Director of the Graduate Program to initiate such a request.

AUDITING COURSES

Students may audit a course only with their academic advisor's and instructor's permission. Auditors should plan to attend meetings informally without formally registering.

GRADING

Graduate students in the Annenberg School are expected to demonstrate mastery of the course material. If a student's GPA drops below 3.0, the Graduate Studies Committee will alert the academic advisor and immediately review that student's file and make suggestions for improvement. If the GPA is below 3.0 for two consecutive semesters, the Graduate Studies Committee may make additional recommendations, including removal from the program.

APPEALS OF AN EVALUATION, EXAM, OR COURSE GRADE

In matters related to grading and student evaluation, instructors giving an evaluation, exam, or course grade have sole authority for changing such assessment, exam, or course grade, provided they remain on the faculty (or the emeritus faculty) of the University of Pennsylvania.

Students who wish to have any evaluation or grade reviewed must first discuss the matter with the instructor. Should this meeting not yield a satisfactory resolution to the student and the instructor, or if it is not possible, the student may ask the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies for assistance. If the matter is not resolved again, it can be taken up by the Dean of the School. Reviews of any grades are intended to ensure only that appropriate grading procedures have been followed, not to examine or question the faculty's professional judgment.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES GUIDELINES

- Students concerned about the educational climate in any course or project are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the relevant instructor or research supervisor, who should, in all cases, treat these matters with respect and close attention.

- Should these discussions not adequately address the concerns raised, or if students cannot approach the instructor or faculty supervisor directly, students may then consult the Director of the Graduate Program. If the Director of the Graduate Program determines that University policy has been violated, action will be taken consistent with such policy.
- If still unresolved following this consultation, the matter can then be taken up with the Annenberg Dean, whose role is limited to ensuring that the faculty has arranged for a proper review.
- Ombudsman: If a graduate student has a grievance concerning a non-academic matter, the suggested procedural steps should be discussed with (as applicable):
 - Director of the Graduate Program
 - Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies
 - Dean
 - Ombudsman.

At any point, the student may wish to circumvent steps a-c and contact the Ombudsman.

Information about the University grievance procedures policy can be found at <https://www.sas.upenn.edu/graduate-division/resources/academic-grievance-procedure>.

INCOMPLETE GRADES

An incomplete grade (“I”) is given only for satisfactory work that cannot be completed on time because of unusual problems that justify an extension. Incomplete grades must be changed to letter grades by the time agreed upon by the instructor, but no later than the day on which grades are due for ASC students in the semester following the original assignment of an Incomplete grade. Thus, Incompletes awarded in the Fall semester must be eliminated no later than the “Grades due” date in the following May. Incompletes given in the Spring semester must be eliminated no later than the “Grades due” date the following December. If a grade of Incomplete is not eliminated by the due date, the course will not count toward the minimum course requirements, and the student will have to enroll in another class at their own expense to meet the minimum course requirements. Students who are given an incomplete grade will be notified by the Director of the Graduate Program, copying the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies and the student’s advisor.

While a single grade of Incomplete may be explained as due to temporary circumstances, the accumulation of two or more Incompletes, or a pattern of individual Incompletes over time, suggests that the student may be having academic difficulty. The Graduate Studies Committee will take such facts into account in its regular review of academic progress and will act as needed. A student must be in [good academic standing](#) to continue in the degree program and/or to be eligible for financial aid.

Students with Incomplete grades in courses required for the doctorate are not eligible to undergo the take the Comprehensive Examination until the necessary work has been completed and submitted.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Each student must complete an evaluation for each course. Evaluations are completed anonymously. Questions regarding the course evaluation process should be directed to the Director of the Graduate Program.

TEACHING FELLOW EVALUATIONS

Teaching Fellows are encouraged to distribute a school-based teaching evaluation to the students in the course they are working with to help build their teaching portfolio. The evaluations will be held for the teaching fellow until after the course is completed and grades have been submitted.

HUMAN SUBJECTS: POLICY REGARDING RESEARCH

Students whose research involves human subjects and who have received ASC faculty approval for a COMM 6990, COMM 7990, dissertation proposal, or other research project must complete the [IRB Protocol Face Sheet](#) for the Office of Regulatory Affairs in consultation with the advisor, instructor, or thesis supervisor. For further information, check the following website: <https://irb.upenn.edu/>. Students must submit a completed copy of the IRB Face Sheet with their research proposal.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EVALUATION PROFICIENCY TEST FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The University requires that all international teaching assistants (ITAs), except those from Canada, the U.K., and Australia, be certified as fluent in English before they can teach undergraduates. For details, see the [Penn ELP Testing and Training website](#).

International students must take the Interactive Performance Test (IPT) before the first semester starts, even if they are not assigned as Teaching Assistants during the first semester. New international students will be informed during the summer of the test date.

QUALIFICATIONS EVALUATION

Please note that the Qualifications Evaluation is being phased out, effective for the class entering in Fall 2025. Students who entered in 2024 and 2023 should speak with the Director of the Graduate Program regarding options for completing the QE and comprehensive exam.

Qualifications Evaluation (QE) is a review conducted by the Graduate Studies Committee to ensure Ph.D. students have the requisite skills, creativity, initiative, and plans to complete their degree, including their dissertation, successfully. The Graduate Studies Committee, in consultation with the student's advisor, evaluates the students' progress, looks at the coursework, and evaluates the independent research they have conducted. The students submit a portfolio which includes:

- A portfolio with papers from coursework and research work from the first two years; the portfolio should also include a statement of what you plan to work on in the future
- The student's proposed comprehensive exam committee
- A list of current and future courses the student plans to complete
- Any transfer credit requests
- A written evaluation from the advisor (to be collected by the Director of the Graduate Program)

The student's advisor writes a letter to the Graduate Studies Committee with their evaluation of the student's work. The Graduate Studies Committee will dive deeper into the portfolio if the letter flags issues. The goal is to determine whether the students successfully pass this milestone and remain in the program. After the evaluation, the student receives a letter from the Graduate Dean and their Advisor and is eligible for a master's degree.

Suppose the Graduate Studies Committee deems a student's QE unacceptable after consultation with the student's advisor and other relevant faculty. In that case, the committee may do one of three things: (1) provide the student with feedback on the areas of concern and ask them to resubmit a revised QE dossier for re-evaluation. In such cases the student should consult with the Director of the Graduate Program and their advisor and resubmit the dossier within 30 days of the date on which the student was notified; (2) Remove the student from the Ph.D. program but permit them to complete the requirements for a Master of Arts degree; or (3) Ask the student to leave the program immediately.

MASTER OF ARTS (M.A.) DEGREE

Students may apply for a Master of Arts in lieu of the Comprehensive Exam if they cannot complete the Ph.D. The M.A. is awarded by the Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS), and all degree applicants must complete the online SAS application by the appropriate deadline for the term in which the degree is to be awarded. **Those who take the QE do not have to complete this form.** Applicants must also complete the [Master of Arts Application](#) and submit a copy of the approved paper to the Director of the Graduate program at least two weeks before the end of the term in which the degree is to be awarded.

- A prospective candidate for a Research Master's degree must complete at least four course units in the field of the major.
- All Research Master's students are required to complete a research requirement. This research requirement consists of two parts:
 - 1) completing a research course or engaging in research supervised by the Graduate Group, and
 - 2) preparing a thesis or comprehensive scholarly report in the student's major field of study.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

The following details are intended to offer a basic common framework. Students should always communicate with their advisors and committee members to understand what is expected of them and what standards will be used to evaluate their knowledge and performance.

1. Purpose
 - a. The Comprehensive Exam (CE) is designed to test students' knowledge of the field, their critical understanding of the state of the art/science, and their ability to build on past work. The main purpose is to assess students' ability to synthesize theoretical debates and methodological approaches in communication research based on their coursework and research experience. Students are not expected to undertake additional reading beyond their regular research activities, which should already involve substantial broad

and deep reading. They should always consult with their advisor about preparation strategies. Sample questions are not provided.

The exam questions focus on theory and methods. Successful responses will:

- Demonstrate deep, professional-level knowledge of the foundational literature of the field of communication and critical assessment of the scholarship/evidence on which it is based.
- Address all components of the question with appropriate references to theories, authors, and publications, with the ability to reflect on research implications and future directions.
- Present a well-organized argument with a logical structure and claims supported by citations.
- Exhibit a level of oral and written communication about scholarly issues that is aligned with the standards of the discipline (e.g., journals, conference presentations, professional talks).

Each response is expected to reflect the student's individual research trajectory and preparation for dissertation work.

2. Exam Committee

- a. The comprehensive exam committee consists of three Annenberg standing faculty members: the student's advisor and two additional faculty. The committee evaluates both the written examinations and the oral defense. While not required, students may choose to use the same faculty for their comprehensive exam and dissertation committees.
- b. Committee membership should reflect the student's research interests and requires written approval from the advisor and all committee members. The committee must be submitted via the appropriate form on the Policies & Procedures page at least four weeks prior to the start of the exam.

3. Format

- a. The CE consists of three elements: (1) a written essay on theory, (2) a written essay on methods, and (3) an oral defense covering the contents of both essays.
- b. On the day for each written essay, students receive three questions at 9:00 a.m. and must submit one response (to a single question of their choice) by 5:00 p.m. the same day. Exams are open-book and completed at a location of the student's choosing. Students must adhere to the honor system and may not consult with others or use AI to write the essays.
- c. On the day of the oral defense, students will meet for 1 to 2 hours with their exam committee. During this time, the students will address the questions asked by the committee, based on the content of the written essays (which the committee will have read prior to the defense). About half of the oral defense will be devoted to the theory essay and the other half to the methods essay.

4. Timeline

- a. The CE is administered each spring. The written essays are scheduled for the week following the Spring Break (per Penn's academic calendar). This timing is set to avoid conflicts with the end of the spring semester and is approved by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies and the Doctoral Studies Committee. The oral defense is scheduled within a month of submitting the essays at a time that works for the three committee members and the student.

5. Evaluation

- a. The CE committee will evaluate the three elements of the exam (theory essay, methods essay, and oral defense) to determine the pass/fail grade. The oral component is a distinct third element of the overall evaluation, weighted alongside the written essays. This means that no feedback on the essays will be offered prior to the oral defense.

6. Outcomes

- a. The committee will notify the student of the outcome either at the end of the oral defense (if they opt to have the student leave and come back after the discussion) or by email within one week after the defense. The advisor will also notify Rachel Pepper of the outcome following the oral defense.

There are three possible outcomes:

1. The committee determines the student merits a pass. The student is then allowed to continue advancing in the program and work towards the next milestone (thesis proposal defense).
2. The committee determines the student fails one essay and/or the associated oral defense. In this case, the committee decides whether it is appropriate for the student to revise the essay and/or retake the oral component. These revisions should be scheduled within a month of receiving the 'fail' notification. If the committee determines that the rewritten essay and/or associated oral defense merit another 'fail', the student will be asked to leave the program (see the following point for an explanation of what this means).
3. The committee determines the student fails both essays and the oral exam. A retake of the comprehensive exam is not an option. The student is then asked to leave the program.
 - a. This means that the mechanisms for university withdrawal are activated. The student will no longer be enrolled as a Penn student, all RF/TF responsibilities will cease to be active, and so will any course registrations. Travel and research funds will no longer be active or available. The balance of the academic year stipend will be paid in a lump sum in the pay period which coincides with the dismissal. The academic year stipend ends in May each year. Health insurance will be covered through July 31.

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

The three-person dissertation committee's role is to guide the student's dissertation research and to give final approval to the completed dissertation. It must include at least two current members of the ASC standing faculty. An exception to that rule may be granted by the ASC Graduate Studies Committee for faculty who leave the Annenberg standing faculty due to retirement or moving to another institution. Those faculty members may, with the consent of the ASC Graduate Studies Committee, serve on a student's dissertation committee in the role of a standing faculty member and serve as an academic advisor, but may not serve as chair of a dissertation committee (the latter being a University rule).

The dissertation committee may include faculty from other departments, as appropriate. However, the chair and the majority of its members must be current members of the ASC Standing Faculty.

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE CHAIR

See Penn's [Academic Rules for PhD Programs](#).

DISSERTATION SUPERVISOR (ALSO KNOWN AS PRIMARY DISSERTATION ADVISOR OR DISSERTATION ADVISOR):

The Dissertation Supervisor is the Committee Member with primary responsibility for providing substantive guidance and input on the dissertation form, content, and methodology. In most cases, the Dissertation Supervisor and the Dissertation Chair are the same person, though this is not required. In instances where the two roles are split (e.g., if the faculty member most appropriate for the role of Dissertation Supervisor is not a member of the ASC standing faculty), the Supervisor can be thought of as the substantive expert, while the Chair would serve a purely administrative role. Dissertation Supervisors and Dissertation Co-Supervisors must be members of the Standing Faculty at Penn, with special approved exceptions. A member of the Associated Faculty (such as Research Faculty or Adjunct Faculty) may be permitted to serve as a Dissertation Supervisor with prior approval of the Vice Provost for Education on a case-by-case basis. The Graduate Group Chair may petition the Vice Provost for Education in advance for an exception. In such cases, a member of the ASC Standing Faculty must be appointed as the Dissertation Committee Chair.

TIME LIMIT FOR COMPLETION OF THE PROPOSAL AND THE DISSERTATION

The University's maximum time limit for completing Ph.D. requirements is ten years after matriculation. (See: [Academic Rules for PhD Programs website](#))

Annenberg students who have not completed all requirements for the Ph.D., including the deposit of the dissertation, within ten years of matriculating, must submit all written work they have completed on their dissertation to a committee comprised of a minimum of three members of the ASC standing faculty. This committee may be the student's dissertation committee or, if that committee is not intact, an Ad Hoc committee appointed by the Committee on Graduate Studies. The committee members will evaluate this material (they may, at their discretion, meet with the student), and take one of the following actions: (1) require the student to retake all or part of the Comprehensive Examination (if the

committee believes there is a question about the continued currency of the student's research); (2) impose other conditions such as the committee believes will ensure the currency and timely completion of the student's work toward the Ph.D.; (3) recommend to the Committee on Graduate Studies that the student be disqualified from continued doctoral candidacy (if the committee believes the written work provides insufficient evidence of progress toward the completion of an adequate doctoral dissertation). In the case of (1) or (2) above, the committee will report its decisions and actions to the Committee on Graduate Studies. Upon satisfactory re-certification, the student must complete all requirements for the PhD, including depositing the dissertation, within one year.

Recertification will be permitted only in exceptional circumstances. Requests for recertification must be submitted by May 31 of the tenth year. The student will be automatically withdrawn from the program **if the dissertation is not defended and deposited within the one-year extension.**

ANNUAL REPORT ON DISSERTATION

To support Penn's Time Limit rule, an annual report on the status of the dissertation must be filed for every year a student is registered for Comm9950: dissertation status. The dissertation proposal defense may satisfy this requirement for the year it is defended. Details can be found on Penn's site under [Dissertation Composition and Meetings](#).

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL AND ORAL DEFENSE

Before becoming eligible for a dissertation research fellowship and beginning work on the dissertation, the student must submit and defend a proposal for dissertation research to their Dissertation Committee. The proposal is a complete statement of the research problem, including its theoretical rationale and methodology. The student will defend the proposal at an oral exam with the Dissertation Committee. The student should talk with their advisor about preparing for the oral defense. After the oral defense, the committee may require the student to respond to questions with changes either to the whole committee or just the chair. After the oral defense, the student must submit the [Proposal Defense form](#) to the Director of the Graduate Program, who will submit the data to Penn Graduate Forms.

DEFENSE AND A PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF THE DISSERTATION

After completing the dissertation, the student submits a draft copy to each committee member **at least** two weeks in advance. The committee will then assemble to conduct the final examination. On the appointed day, the student will give a public talk (20-30 minutes) on the dissertation topic to all Annenberg faculty and students who wish to attend. At the end of the presentation, the audience will leave, and the student will orally defend the dissertation in front of the dissertation committee. The committee will ask questions of the candidate and then decide whether to accept or reject the dissertation. After the oral defense, the committee may require the student to respond to questions with changes to the whole committee or just the chair before approving the dissertation for deposit.

DEPOSITING PROCEDURES FOR SUBMISSION OF FINAL DRAFT FOR DEGREE CONFERRAL

Final approval of the dissertation completes the program requirements for the Ph.D. degree. Results of the final examination are reported to the Director of the Graduate Program by the committee chair on

the Penn Graduate Forms system. All information regarding [defense and deposit can be found on the Provost's webpage.](#)

GRADUATION AND CONFERRING OF PH.D. DEGREES

Degrees are conferred in May, August, and December of each year. Formal commencement ceremonies are held in May. [Ph.D. candidates file for their degree through the Office of the Provost.](#)

ACADEMIC FREEDOM STATEMENT FOR ASC GRADUATE STUDENTS AND FACULTY

In its educational and research programs, ASC seeks to foster an open exchange of ideas and is committed to academic freedom for its faculty and students.

The faculty determines the content and methods of instruction and research. In the pursuit of knowledge, faculty members often confront complex, controversial, and sometimes uncomfortable issues, and they have a duty as educators to encourage students to do the same.

PROGRESS IN THE PH.D. PROGRAM

The first three semesters of the program are foundational, particularly for those with no prior graduate work in communication. Those semesters should ordinarily be spent gaining basic theoretical and methodological training across the areas of the curriculum, with somewhat greater focus in the student's primary area.

Students who enter with no prior graduate work will typically complete all their substantive courses by the end of their sixth semester of residence (but no later than the seventh semester). Students entering with up to four transferable courses will typically complete the remainder of their coursework by the end of the fourth semester of residence (but no later than the fifth semester). To meet these goals efficiently, some students may choose to take four courses in some semesters, typically during their first three semesters. They may do so only with the permission of their advisor and the Committee on Graduate Studies.

SAMPLE PLAN OF STUDY

Blue: funding type

Green: academics

SEMESTER 1 – Fall	SEMESTER 2 - Spring
TF/RF funding <i>3 classes</i>	TF/RF funding <i>3 classes</i> FIRST YEAR REVIEW
SEMESTER 3 – Fall	SEMESTER 4 - Spring
TF/RF funding <i>3 classes</i>	TF/RF funding <i>3 classes</i> COMPREHENSIVE EXAM
SEMESTER 5 – Fall	SEMESTER 6 - Spring
TF/RF funding <i>3 classes</i>	TF/RF funding <i>2 or 3 classes</i>
SEMESTER 7 – Fall	SEMESTER 8 - Spring
TF/RF funding Additional classes allowed Proposal defense by December 20	TF/RF funding No coursework
SEMESTER 9 – Fall	SEMESTER 10 - Spring
Dissertation Research Fellowship	Dissertation Research Fellowship Goal: final defense by May, with summer deposit option*

*DRF will remain available until August for those with an [August deposit date](#). Students who defend in May will still receive their payments for June, July, and August.

SUMMER

- Students are expected to meet with their advisor after summer break to provide updates and plans for the upcoming year.

GOOD STANDING/SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

To be in Good Standing in the Ph.D. program and to be eligible for funding, all the following requirements must be completed successfully and on time:

- Advisor selection
- 3.0 GPA across all coursework
- Research project
- Favorable evaluations by faculty in the RA and TA fellowship activities
- Pass the Comprehensive Examination
- Coursework (17 course units minimum) completed

- Defense of the dissertation proposal (the first semester after the end of coursework)
- Defense and the public presentation of dissertation research within the time limit

The records of all Annenberg School students are reviewed at the end of each semester to determine whether their performance meets standards for satisfactory progress. Students whose performance falls below the school's expectations may be advised to withdraw or may be dropped from the program.

RESEARCH, TEACHING, AND DISSERTATION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

RESEARCH (RF) AND TEACHING (TF) FELLOWSHIPS

The purpose of ASC fellowships is to enable students to develop exemplary research and teaching skills while completing their course of studies. Each semester, fellows are assigned to faculty mentors under whose supervision they will conduct research or teaching duties. While the specific mix of teaching and research fellowship assignments varies depending in part on each student's career goals, all students are expected to be teaching fellows twice during the duration of support. Although the amount of time devoted to an RF or TF assignment will vary during a semester, ASC fellows are expected to spend an average of no more than 19 hours per week on their position. **Students may not accept outside employment during the period when supported, nor may they reduce or interrupt their full-time program while on fellowship support.** Exceptions to these rules on academic grounds may occur with the written permission of a student's academic advisor, the Director of the Graduate Program, and the ASC Dean. Awards of financial support are typically renewed each semester the student is eligible, as long as the student makes satisfactory progress in coursework and fulfills the terms of the fellowships.

When each TF or RF assignment is completed, faculty mentors will provide students with feedback on their performance. Students are responsible for scheduling a meeting with their mentors to review and evaluate the work completed during the term.

RESEARCH FELLOW ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Research fellowships can take many forms, from assisting on a faculty member's new or ongoing research to working on a project initiated by the RF and supervised by a faculty member. For this reason, RFs and their faculty mentors must meet (ideally before the start of the semester) to review the goals for the research fellowship. The RF may have specific skills they are interested in developing (e.g., research questions, specific data collection or data analysis techniques, etc.), and the faculty mentor may have particular research goals that the fellow will be expected to carry out. In addition, the RF and faculty mentor should meet regularly to discuss ongoing assignments, assess the quality and progress of work, and ensure that the needs of both the faculty mentor and the RF are being met.

While the faculty mentor determines an RF assignment's specific structure and substance, the faculty must consider how the experience can benefit students' future research roles. Typical activities for RFs include:

- Literature reviews

- Developing research questions and hypotheses
- Data collection
- Data analysis
- Report and paper writing
- Grant writing
- Attending research team meetings
- Helping to identify speakers or organize events

TEACHING FELLOW ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Teaching fellowships are meant to help ASC graduate students develop their pedagogical skills while assisting the instructor with various aspects of the course. Before the beginning of the semester, it is a good idea to meet to review goals and identify specific skills for development (e.g., lecturing, designing assignments, etc.). The instructors may have educational goals for the class that the fellow should learn to carry out. All teaching fellows are **required** to attend the [Center for Teaching and Learning's TA training course](#).

Teaching fellows are expected to be present at each class session and to do all the class readings to assist students and evaluate their performance effectively. The TF and faculty mentor should meet regularly to discuss ongoing assignments, assess the quality and progress of work, and ensure that the needs of the course are being met. In addition, teaching fellows, like instructors, are expected to hold at least two office hours each week. Ideally, the TF hours should differ from the instructor's (and other TF hours, if there is more than one assigned to the course). Office hours should be consistently held, and students should be notified if they are cancelled or changed. Office hours allow students to meet with TFs about exam preparation, paper writing, and course material clarification. Finally, a TF's responsibilities continue until all grading is complete and final grades have been submitted.

Skills students should practice with appropriate supervision include:

- Creating study guides
- Meeting with students about assignments
- Developing exam questions
- Grading exams and assignments
- Setting up classroom technology
- Recording attendance
- Maintaining the course Canvas site
- Sending course problem notices
- Helping to organize outside speakers
- Guest lecturing

Annenberg School regulations state that TF duties should not exceed 19 hours per week, on average, to not infringe on their other scholarly activities. While it is recognized that some weeks will require more hours (e.g., during periods when grading occurs) and others require fewer, an average of no more than 19 hours must be respected.

If the teaching fellow or the instructor has questions or concerns, they should contact Dr. Litty Paxton, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies.

DISSERTATION RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP (DRF)

A 12-month Dissertation Research Fellowship (DRF) is available to students who complete an acceptable dissertation proposal in a timely manner. The award of a DRF is subject to available funds and approval by the Dean. Students making regular progress in the program should plan to defend their proposal in the semester following the end of coursework. Any student whose dissertation proposal is not approved within two semesters after completing coursework will unlikely receive a DRF. Students whose dissertation proposal is not approved by the end of the fifth semester after coursework is completed are not eligible for DRF funding unless they obtain approval from the Dean and the Director of the Graduate Program. Doctoral candidates who have done the following may apply for a DRF:

- Completed all coursework
- Passed the Comprehensive Exam
- Defended the dissertation proposal successfully
- Been certified by the advisor as ready to begin work on the dissertation.

The DRF provides a stipend and covers dissertation tuition, fees, and the student health insurance premium for up to 12 consecutive months. Eligible candidates may apply for DRF at any time after a successful proposal defense by submitting a completed [Dissertation Research Fellowship form](#) to the Director of the Graduate Program. The application must include a work schedule approved by the dissertation supervisor and certification by the supervisor that the student's committee has accepted the candidate's dissertation proposal without further revision. DRF funding is not guaranteed and is always subject to approval by the Dean and the Director of the Graduate Program.

If the candidate does not demonstrate satisfactory progress toward completion of the dissertation, the DRF award can be discontinued with the Dean's approval. To begin funding in a given month, the Business Office must receive the student's approved [DRF form](#) before the 15th of the month. See the Stipends and Payroll section for additional information. Since the DRF is intended to provide students with an uninterrupted period to complete their dissertations on time, students may **not** be employed elsewhere during this period. In addition, once started, it is presumed that the DRF will be continued without interruption for 12 contiguous months. The only exceptions to this will be for health or personal emergencies, or if a student has a teaching or research opportunity that will add substantially to their professional development. Under these special circumstances, a student may request to have the DRF "paused" for a limited period. Such requests must be approved by the student's dissertation chair (and primary dissertation advisor if different from the chair) and by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies.

FUNDING AND FINANCIAL POLICIES

DURATION OF SUPPORT

Annenberg students receive a fellowship stipend and a tuition waiver for five academic years (ten semesters), subject to sufficient academic progress. Students receiving a stipend must maintain a full schedule of courses (three-course units per semester) while working toward completing a minimum of 17 courses. With the permission of their advisor, students may take four courses in a semester.

Suppose a student completes the minimum of 17 courses for the Ph.D. and is still eligible for support. In that case, the student may take additional courses (with approval from the advisor) within the Annenberg School, but not in other schools. Tuition for classes outside of ASC will NOT be paid once the student has completed 20 courses.

To receive continued funding, all students must remain in good standing and participate in an active scholarship program. All funding decisions are subject to the approval of the Annenberg Dean and the Director of the Graduate Program.

STIPENDS AND PAYROLL

Research and Teaching Fellowship Stipends: The 2025-2026 stipend will be \$44,027. Funding will be distributed in equal installments over 12 months from September 2025 through August 2026, except students in the incoming cohort will have their stipend distributed equally over 13 months from August 2025 to August 2026. The latter will allow incoming students an advanced stipend to prepare for the move to the Philadelphia area and the program. Incoming students will also receive a taxable one-time relocation payment of \$1,000 in their first paycheck.

Dissertation Research Fellowship Stipends: The 2025-2026 DRF stipend will be \$44,027 and paid in 12 equal monthly installments according to the start date noted on the student's approved DRF application. If a student deposits their dissertation at any point before the stipend period ends, the remainder of the stipend will be issued as a one-time payment in the month in which the student deposits.

According to the University's published monthly payroll schedule, monthly stipend payments are issued on the last business day of the month. Students should access [Workday](#) to maintain their personal information, including addresses, tax forms, and direct deposit information. Students should also consult Penn's [Guide to Graduate Student Appointments](#) for additional details regarding stipend payments and taxability, and contact Penn's HCM Solution Center with any tax-related questions at solutioncenter@upenn.edu or [\(215\) 898-7372](tel:215-898-7372). International students should also refer to the [ISSS](#) webpage for additional tax information.

RESEARCH & TRAVEL SUPPORT

All Annenberg doctoral students receiving a regular fellowship from the school (research, teaching, or dissertation) have access to a yearly personal research and travel (R&T) budget (currently \$1,700 per academic year running from September 1 to August 31). The primary purpose of this fund is to provide travel support for attendance at professional and academic conferences at which a student has some formal role (e.g., presenting a research paper or poster, acting as a discussant, group chair, or panel moderator, or performing administrative duties, etc.). However, funds may also support other approved educational and research purposes.

General guidelines for using research and travel funds are listed in [this document](#) and are governed by Penn's [Financial Policies](#). Questions about your research and travel funds should be directed to the [ASC Business Office](#).

DISSERTATION RESEARCH BUDGET

The dissertation research budget is \$1,200. These funds are awarded upon submission of a signed [DRF Application form](#) and combined with the \$1,700 R&T budget. The funds follow the same processes and policies outlined in the [research and travel guidelines](#).

Additional Policies for Allowability of Dissertation Fund Disbursements:

- Only expenses incurred AFTER the proposal has been successfully defended will be allowable.
- Only expenses incurred while performing research related to the dissertation are eligible for reimbursement.
- Final reimbursement requests must be submitted within two weeks after the dissertation is successfully defended. Reimbursement requests submitted after this deadline may require a processing exception, resulting in delays in receiving the reimbursement.
- The dissertation deposit fee is not eligible for reimbursement.
- The business office must approve technology purchases while on DRF, which are unallowable post-defense.

DISSERTATION TUITION

Ph.D. candidates must be enrolled continuously in COMM 9950 from the time they complete coursework until they graduate. This includes the semester in which the degree is conferred. Candidates who have successfully defended their dissertations are eligible to be reimbursed for COMM 9950 tuition for the term in which they graduate if they fulfill the following requirements:

- The dissertation is successfully defended, and relevant [Penn Graduate Forms](#) are submitted.
- The "[Application for the Degree](#)" online form is submitted to the Provost's Office by the required deadline.
- The dissertation is submitted to the Provost's Office.

Students who do not fulfill all these requirements are fully responsible for all fees and tuition costs for that semester and each semester until completion.

CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION/ LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND WITHDRAWAL

[Please see Penn's Policy](#)

Leave requests can be made with the [Leave of Absence form](#), and return from leave can be requested with the [Return form](#).

- NOTE: All students are fully responsible for paying their tuition, fees, and health insurance after completing the approved semesters of support. See also: <https://catalog.upenn.edu/graduate/policies-procedures/leaves-of-absence/> and resources/FAQ's <https://provost.upenn.edu/for-students/graduate-and-professional-education/doctoral-students/>

HARDSHIP FUNDING

- Students facing hardships that prevent them from defending their dissertations by the end of the fifth year can pursue funding support.
 - Students must be in DRF support terms.
 - To apply, students should contact the Director of the Graduate Program and the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies, requesting hardship funding. Requests must include a timeline for completion.
 - Additional funding, if granted, can only cover tuition, fees, and insurance for up to one extra semester.

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Internal and External Grants for Scholarly Projects and in support of Dissertation Research Costs

Proposals for internal and external grants from campus schools and centers, private foundations, government agencies, and corporations to fund scholarly projects and offset dissertation research costs should be reviewed by the student and their advisor(s) before the application submission. Students must notify the ASC Business Office of the submission, providing them with a copy of the approved proposal and its budget before the application deadline. ASC's Director of Finance and Sponsored Programs may suggest changes and edits to the financial component of the grant application and may share the proposal with the ASC Dean's Office and/or the Office of Research Services. The student must provide the ASC Business Office with the Notice of Award if funds are awarded, and the Business Office will administer the funding on behalf of the student in accordance with all University, School, and Agency-sponsored research policies and procedures.

Internal and External Fellowships

Although Annenberg provides fellowship support to all students accepted into the program, doctoral candidates are encouraged to seek out and apply for support from other internal or external sources. Fellowship awards from internal and external groups carry prestige and honor along with monetary rewards, and Annenberg students are strong competitors for such awards. Stipends provided by internal fellowships supersede the Annenberg stipend. If the stipend amount awarded by an internal fellowship is less than the ASC stipend, ASC will cover the difference. Students awarded external fellowships should discuss the fellowship details with the Director of the Graduate Program in conjunction with the ASC Business Office.

Candidates who receive other internal or external fellowships may decide, subject to the approval of the Dean, to reschedule/extend the dissertation defense timeline for the DRF. Students who are funded by DRF may not accept outside employment during the fellowship except in unusual circumstances, such as when employment is necessary for the conduct of the research. The Graduate Studies Committee must approve such exceptions.

DOCTORAL FELLOW AFFILIATIONS

- Doctoral fellows can be provided up to \$1,000 from center budgets for research and travel expenses (ex., books, conference travel, human subject studies, data collection, etc.). The center

director should approve these expenses. (Note: Technology purchases should be an exception to the rule and should be discussed with the director. It is always a good idea to see if the Media Lab has the pertinent technology before purchasing new technology.)

- Doctoral fellows should NOT be offered a stipend for their affiliation as fellows.
- Doctoral fellows who perform extra work in a center outside their RF assignment (ex., podcasting, editing, monitoring symposia, etc.) may be compensated for this type of work. Fellows should receive permission from their advisor to perform any additional paid work outside their RF/TF role.
- Centers with grant-supported research may pay for the doctoral fellows to travel and present research using grant funds (this would not be deducted from the \$1,000 in research and travel).
- If a fellow is affiliated with multiple centers, the \$1,000 in R&T will be split between the various centers.

STUDENT HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFIT

All University of Pennsylvania students must carry health insurance, either through the University under the Penn Student Insurance Plan (PSIP) or through an outside provider. Those students with coverage through an outside provider must provide proof of insurance by completing the online waiver form on the [Penn Student Health Services website](#).

All Annenberg Ph.D. students eligible for tuition may enroll in the single PSIP, and Annenberg will cover the cost of the single health premium for the plan. Students must enroll in the plan directly by using the website noted above. The insurance premium will appear on the student's bursar bill, and the school will pay the cost. Students who waive coverage will not be eligible for any cash allowance. Please note that ASC reserves the right to alter this benefit at any time. Students with families are encouraged to apply for Penn's Family Center Grant.

Annenberg will supplement the additional 50% of dental coverage for students who select the [Penn Dental School](#) coverage, which coincides with the [Dental Insurance Reimbursement Grant](#). ASC will also cover 50% of the Aetna dental coverage for students who elect this option. Students enrolled in dental plans will receive reimbursements for their coverage processed directly through their student accounts annually, each Fall, generally by October.

Students who have completed all coursework and have been approved for DRF are eligible for student health coverage through the semester in which the degree is conferred but no more than two (2) full semesters after DRF is approved (NOTE: Penn's Student Insurance Plan ends 12/31 for those graduating in the Fall and 7/31 for those graduating in the Spring). For students graduating in the Spring, the School will cover the cost of one (1) additional month of insurance in August of that year, should you need it. The instructions for submitting your request will be emailed before your graduation date. Those students may choose to begin health insurance either at the start of their Dissertation Research Fellowship period or during the pre-DRF period, with the understanding that after the 12 months, no additional funding for the student's health premium will be provided, and it will be the student's responsibility to cover the full premium cost.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS, COMPUTING, CLASSROOM, AND AUDIO/VISUAL TECHNOLOGY

The Information Technology Department of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania oversees many of the technology-related tasks at the school. Our staff is dynamic and experienced in a variety of technical backgrounds. Primarily, we manage, maintain, and develop an extended computer network in our main building at 3620 Walnut Street, our satellite office at the Annenberg Public Policy Center Building, 3901 Walnut Street, and the Richards Building, as well as providing custom solutions for the varied technology needs of our faculty, staff, and students.

The IT department supports classroom technology, several grants and research projects, and resources for individual users; from a full suite of business and academic software (including Microsoft Office 365), desktop computers, to virtual desktops that can be accessed from anywhere on the Internet. A digital media lab has video editing workstations, audio/video equipment, and expansive multi-purpose studio space. The Help Desk provides phone support and walk-in assistance for technology questions during office hours. Support requests are handled through an automated ticketing system that connects users with the IT staff members who can best provide a solution.

AI TOOLS USAGE GUIDELINES

The Annenberg School for Communication has developed “AI Tools Usage Guidelines” for responsible and effective use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). These guidelines align with Penn’s overarching policies on data protection, academic integrity, and ethical conduct. These guidelines can be found [here](#).

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

In addition to the resources at ASC, the University of Pennsylvania offers many computing resources to the community. Students should familiarize themselves with the resources available through the Information Systems and Computing (ISC) website, the university department for information systems, <https://www.isc.upenn.edu/>. Within the university computing structure described by ISC, the Annenberg School computer center is your Local Service Provider (LSP). ASC graduate students can use school/university technology resources if they are in good standing, enrolled for credit, or working on school-authorized projects. The Van Pelt Library also has a large selection of state-of-the-art AV equipment, including large-format printers available to anyone with a Penn card.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ASC adopts and adheres to the Computing and Networking Policies and Laws documented online by ISC (Information Systems and Computing <http://www.upenn.edu/computing/policy>, please read these policies and submit any questions or concerns to ithelpdesk@asc.upenn.edu.

USER SUPPORT

ASC supports only the software pre-installed on your workstation. Although we offer no training in its use beyond the orientation offered at the beginning of each school year, we recommend you send questions to us. A member of the computer staff may be able to provide some guidance.

As a general policy, user support is limited to hardware or software failure (i.e., when hardware or software fails to work as it was designed to run). This includes password problems, network

connectivity, printer problems, e-mail accessibility, or other systemic malfunctions. We do not support home computers or networking problems outside the Annenberg School or its satellite offices.

Members of the Annenberg community have access to network disk space (commonly called H:\ drive), which is backed up multiple times a day and can be accessed remotely. Please use this space to store your school-related files only. Please do not store important files on your C: (local drive). Additionally, please know your C: drive may be purged without notice. Although we perform regular backups of our file servers (your H:\ drive and web space), neither the Annenberg School for Communication nor the University of Pennsylvania is responsible for data loss because of using the University's information systems. The University also provides limited cloud storage, *Penn + Box*, which can be used to share data with other users.

OFFICE 365 USE FOLLOWING GRADUATION

Continued access to Office 365 Email, Desktop, and Cloud after dissertation deposit will be provided for six (6) months after the recorded month of deposit (Penn + Box access is terminated immediately upon dissertation deposit): August (and May) deposits will have continued use of O365 until end-of-day on February 28; December deposits will have continued use until end-of-day on June 30. Exceptions to this policy will be considered only upon request by and approval of the advisor.

To request access to resources beyond the regular periods identified above, the responsible faculty member or staff administrator must complete a [Request for Continued Access to Electronic Resources](#) form. After submitting the form, an IT team member will review it and reply to the faculty member and/or staff administrator with further information. If the request is approved, the departing employee/student must sign a Terms of Use Agreement, which should be scanned and emailed to Lizz Cooper (lizz.cooper@asc.upenn.edu).

A few key points about the request form:

1. Requested resources will be extended for six months unless a shorter period is noted. Extensions beyond six months can be requested by completing a new form.
2. A monthly cost is associated with Office 365 and Qualtrics, and a valid budget account number must be provided for the request to be approved.
3. The name of the individual completing the form is responsible for ensuring that the Terms of Use Agreement is completed, and for communicating with IT regarding changes to the request, further extensions, etc.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING COMPUTER RESOURCES AT THE ANNENBERG SCHOOL FOR COMMUNICATION

The following information will help you access the computing resources at the Annenberg School for Communication. Save this info!

You have three sets of computing credentials at ASC.

- **PennKey:** Your PennKey credentials. This is provided by the University and is used to access University-wide resources, including the library and its online and digital catalogs. See <http://www.upenn.edu/computing/pennkey/> for more information.

- **PennO365 Email:** Our email services are outsourced to Microsoft. Your PennO365 credentials are your username and password for logging into your e-mail (both through Outlook at your workstation and through the e-mail web-client available on any computer with an Internet connection).
- The format for entering your PennO365 username is <PennKey>@upenn.edu (your PennKey, without the brackets < >). This username and password are exclusively used for logging into your PennO365 account.
- The format for your PennO365 address is <firstname.lastname>@ asc.upenn.edu. This is your email address, separate from your PennO365 username. This is your outbound email address, and the only ASC email you should put on your business cards!
- **Janus:** Your Janus account is your username and password for logging in to the Annenberg network. These credentials are used for logging into your workstation, mapping network drives, installing network printers, creating IT Help Desk support tickets, and making room requests through the school's room request web page. When you are at your workstation, you enter your <username> to log in to Janus. If you are connecting to a computer that is not a member of the Janus domain, then enter your username as Janus\<username> (your Janus username, without the brackets < >). Please note that your ASC credentials must be entered with a backslash, not a forward slash. The backslash is found above the Enter key on your keyboard.

IMPORTANT WEBSITES TO KNOW

- THE SCHOOL'S MAIN WEBSITE: www.asc.upenn.edu
To log in to the Annenberg website, you will log in with your Janus credentials. Also, the [Annenberg Policies and Resources](#) page
- THE IT HELP DESK SUPPORT TICKETING SITE: <https://ithelpdesk.asc.upenn.edu/>
Use this site to submit a support ticket regarding computer problems or other AV/IT requests. Log in with your Janus credentials.
- ROOM REQUEST SITE: <https://web.asc.upenn.edu/roomrequest/Default.aspx>
Use this site to request meeting rooms and classrooms— log in with your Janus credentials.
- GENERAL UNIVERSITY RESOURCES: www.upenn.edu/u@penn
Use this site to access university resources not specific to the Annenberg School for Communication. Log in using your PennKey username and password.
- UNIVERSITY SOFTWARE DOWNLOAD SITE: <http://www.upenn.edu/computing/product>
Use this site to access University software available for download, including antivirus and SecureW2 (needed for PC access to AirPennNet). Log in using your PennKey username and password.
- PENN+BOX ONLINE FILE SHARING: <https://upenn.box.com/login>
This service is like Dropbox and other web-based file-sharing services. It also allows users to upload and share files, but it also has secure HTTPS to protect and encrypt private uploaded files and any communication on the Penn+Box website. You'll use your PennKey username and password to create your Penn+Box account. You'll have 5GB of space to store files online. You can share with specific users you invite to your online file storage area. You can also download the Penn+Box application on your workstation or laptop, but NOT your VM, to access Penn+Box

from your computer's desktop and log in using the URL above in a web browser. If you are using a VM, do NOT download Dropbox; instead, use the web interface.

- **E-MAIL WEB CLIENT:** www.outlook.com/upenn.edu
Use this site to access your e-mail from any computer connected to the Internet and log in with your PennO365 credentials.
- **PENNO365 MICROSOFT OFFICE SUITE:** Download <https://www.isc.upenn.edu/how-to/penno365-office-365-proplus>
Your PennO365 account comes with five free activations of the Microsoft Office Suite (Outlook, Word, Excel, etc.) for your personal computers. You can use these activations on a personal laptop and desktop, and this does not include mobile devices or university-owned computers. To download, log in using your PennO365 credentials and click the Install Office 2017 button in the top right corner.
- **PENNO365 ONEDRIVE:** <https://onedrive.live.com/about/en-us/>
This service is similar to Google Drive and other web-based file-sharing management services. Microsoft OneDrive and the rest of the Microsoft Office Suite are available through your Penn Office 365 account. While at ASC, you have 1TB of cloud storage through OneDrive. You can share, collaborate, and save documents and access them on any computer with an internet connection. You will log in using your PennO365 credentials.
- **HORIZON VIEW WEBSITE:** <https://cloud.asc.upenn.edu>
If you have a virtual machine (VM): Use this site to download the Horizon View Client to access your virtual machine (VM) from your home computer. (VMware View Apps for iPad, iPhone, and Android also provide similar access. Please see your device's app store for downloading.) Log in to the View website with your Janus credentials.
- **ASC VPN:** <https://vpn.asc.upenn.edu>
Use this site to connect to our network, so you can access internal network resources without being plugged into the ASC network. Once connected, you can map drives, print to internal printers, access stats servers, and access library resources. Please note that when logged into the VPN, save your files often. You may be logged off without notice if you leave your machine idle. Log in to the ASC VPN with your Janus credentials.
- **UNIVERSITY DIRECTORY WHITE PAGES:** Each school is responsible for listing its students. If you wish to be listed in this directory, please make arrangements by emailing support@asc.upenn.edu. You will automatically be added to the online directory using the email <your PennKey>@upenn.edu. You should change the address listed there to your @asc.upenn.edu address (<firstname.lastname>@asc.upenn.edu) to ensure the ability to participate in university mailing lists. Contact Support@asc.upenn.edu for information on changing your address and changing what information displays to the public.

AUDIO/VIDEO FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

Equipment such as tape recorders and transcribers may be checked out on a limited basis. Requests must be made at least 48 hours in advance, and students may keep such items for a maximum of two weeks. Special arrangements must be made if equipment is needed longer than two weeks.

Facilities for duplication of videotapes or off-air recording (in limited quantities) are available to ASC scholars for research or classroom use only. Student use requires a faculty/staff request sent via e-mail to aschelpdesk@asc.upenn.edu for video services. Services are available to ASC researchers upon submitting and approving a request email to support@asc.upenn.edu detailing the services requested and the equipment needed. Requests will be approved based on staff and equipment availability.

Through the service SnapStream, Annenberg captures live programming on 8 TV channels for 24 hours, 7 days a week. If you need television video or transcripts, please submit an IT ticket.

GENERAL INFORMATION: SCHOOL RESOURCES, FACILITIES, AND BUILDING POLICIES

LIBRARY

The Annenberg Library supports the research and teaching of the School's graduate and undergraduate programs. In addition, the Library serves all research centers and projects at the school and the wider University community. The Library is well-situated within the rich resource environment of the University and is only one block from the central Penn Library, Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center.

COLLECTIONS/FACILITY

Students can access the Penn Libraries' world-class collections and additional electronic and print resources through the Annenberg Library. Search the Penn Libraries catalog for access to books, articles, data, and databases. Some of these databases provide full-text of news sources (e.g., Nexis Uni, NewsBank). Others index and abstract scholarly and professional journal literature (e.g., Communication Source, Web of Science, and PsycINFO). Still others provide visual materials (e.g, AP Photo Archive) or quantitative data (e.g, iPoll, ICPSR). Annenberg Library and Penn Libraries also provide access to research software and platforms. Almost all databases and electronic resources are accessible on and off campus. The ASC Library physically houses reserve materials that support the school's curriculum, reference texts, serials, theses, and DVDS. It also collaborates with the Media Lab, providing access to two outfitted editing computers and returns for equipment checkout.

The ASC Library Archives has a three-pronged focus: history of communication research, journalism, and media. History of communication research collections include the papers of George Gerbner, Elihu Katz, Kurt and Gladys Lang, the International Communication Association (ICA), and the Communication Scholars Oral History Project. The archive's media materials include an extensive collection of prime-time and afternoon soap opera television scripts. See the ASC Library Archives website for more information on collections and use.

The Library's beautiful open reading room is outfitted with soft chairs, tables and booths, whiteboards, a scanner/printer, a color printer, and a water station for cold and hot drinks.

SERVICES

Consultations with the Director of Library Services and Operations, Katie Rawson, can be made by e-mail (katie.rawson@asc.upenn.edu), phone (215-898-6106), or drop-in (Room 216 in the Library). The library offers services for publishing and copyright, data access and management, and research tools and strategies. Other library services include Canvas Courseware support and document delivery. For assistance with Canvas and course reserves, contact the Library Specialist.

Students also have access to services through the Penn Libraries, including research data management, digital scholarship training, and systematic review guidance. These services can be accessed directly through the Penn Libraries or the Annenberg librarian.

BORROWING

Reserve materials may be charged out by ASC faculty and students, as well as students from other parts of the University with a valid Penn ID. The introductory daytime borrowing period for reserve materials is four hours and is renewable, provided others are not waiting to use the material. Reserve materials may also be checked out overnight, two hours before closing, and must be returned within the first hour of the next day. Increasingly, the Library makes reserve readings available electronically in Canvas, the University's course software. Graduate students may also be granted special arrangements (i.e., longer borrowing times) with reserve items not needed for a current course. Reference materials and DVDs circulate for six weeks.

The regular loan period for circulating items depends on the library and your University status. Still, the general practice is that the whole semester lending period is granted to grad students, and a full year is granted to faculty. Items not found in the catalog or already checked out may be requested from another University through the EZ-Borrow, BorrowDirect, or ILL services. All items from our Penn libraries or another library can be sent to Annenberg for checkout here. If you are in a hurry for a book located at Van Pelt or another departmental library on campus, you may want to fetch it yourself, as it can take two or three days for the item to be routed here.

NOTE: Fines are rarely collected at ASC unless a student shows a pattern of negligence. Alert the Librarian as soon as possible concerning e-mail notices you receive for Annenberg fines or lost materials. Fines accrued with other libraries in the Penn Library system must be paid or negotiated at the individual Library. Please note that the ASC Library staff has no jurisdiction over fines at other libraries. Feel free to contact us first with any questions and concerns about your library account.

LOGO: ASC AND UNIVERSITY NAME

ASC and the University of Pennsylvania services and property, including the ASC and University's name and/or official logo and stationery, will be used solely by faculty and staff for School and University business. Faculty, staff, and students are responsible for assuring that staff time, telephones, duplication services, mail services, computing equipment, office and classroom space, audiovisual equipment, office supplies, etc., are used consistently with university policy.

PERSONAL DATA CHANGES

Students should inform the Director of the Graduate Program and the [ASC Business Office](#) of any change of name, address, telephone, or social security number. Once a year, the student should also submit the University's personal data form for use by other University offices. Tax status changes should be reported directly to the [ASC Business Office](#).

BUILDING AND EQUIPMENT ACCESS AND INFORMATION

The 3620 Walnut Street entrance is usually open to ASC faculty, staff, and [students Monday to Friday except during holidays, summer, and other designated times](#). The Main Office hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.,

Monday to Friday. There is no access to the Main Office after hours or on weekends. Holiday access schedules are posted just before each holiday period.

BUILDING ACCESS AFTER HOURS

All persons must sign in and sign out after 5:30 p.m. In addition, ASC security has been instructed to deny building access after 5:30 p.m. to all persons who do not have a valid PENN ID. Only authorized individuals and those with pre-approved written permission from the Building Administrator may enter or remain in restricted areas of the building after hours and on weekends. Restricted areas include grant project rooms, labs, research offices, individual faculty or staff offices, the main office (Room 200), the video lab, classrooms, and the ASC Forum. At least 24 hours in advance, written approval must be obtained from the persons authorized to give access to their area. However, before access is granted by ASC security, the building administrator must sign off on the approval. Any unauthorized individuals in restricted areas will be escorted from the area and/or building. In addition, any authorized person may ask to see an individual's identification at any time.

STUDENT OFFICE SPACE

A limited number of rooms may be provided each year for use by eligible ASC graduate students. The number and location of these offices may change each year. Assistants, hourly paid assistants, research scholars, and dissertation research fellows are eligible for office space, subject to availability.

The general allocation formula is:

- A student who has transferred three or more credits into the program is eligible for an office for four years.
- A student who has transferred fewer than three courses is eligible for an office for five years.

The Director of the Graduate Program prepares a list of students eligible to be considered for office space. The assignments may change each year. Students will move offices by the first week of August.

KEY CHECK-OUT TO STUDENT OFFICES AND CLASSROOMS

Keys to student offices may be checked out in August. Keys must be returned when a student leaves the office, moves to a new office, or upon graduation. There is one time forgiveness for a lost key, and then a \$10 fee per key for all lost office keys. Upon faculty request, teaching and research assistants can sign out classroom keys, granting access to classroom audio/visual equipment. These keys are checked out for the scheduled classes, and the student must present a valid Penn card ID to receive classroom keys; the Penn card ID will be returned upon receipt. There is a \$25 fee for all lost classroom sign-out keys.

OFFICE SECURITY

To discourage theft, lock the office doors even when leaving for only a moment. Keep small valuables such as handbags, wallets, radios, calculators, etc., out of sight. Do not leave books and other possessions unattended in the library, restrooms, halls, or other open places. Use the escort service when leaving the building alone at night. (Please report suspicious persons and activity.) Keep office doors closed and locked when working in the evening and on the weekends. Be alert to your surroundings.

SECURITY

Living and working in an urban environment requires students, staff, and faculty to exercise appropriate caution. The School and University have taken measures to help safeguard the well-being of all who study and work on the campus. ASC employs a security firm to augment the service provided by the University of Pennsylvania. One or more security personnel are on duty in the building during open hours. Security personnel check the identification of persons entering and leaving the building, are authorized to check the ID of anyone who is in the building using its facilities, patrol the halls to ensure areas are secure, provide information to persons unfamiliar with the facility, and exercise crowd control during special events. They should be called upon whenever anyone feels unsafe in the building. The phone number at the Walnut Street entrance is 8-1881 from a campus phone. In an emergency or theft, please contact the Building Administrator or Security.

CAMPUS POLICE

The University of Pennsylvania has a police department of both uniformed and plainclothes officers. They provide security throughout the campus and on the perimeters of university buildings. The emergency phone number is 511 from a campus phone. Off campus or via a cell phone call 215-573-3333. Students are encouraged to program this number into their cell phones.

ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

Accidents should be reported immediately to the Building Administrator, Deborah Porter, the security officer on duty at the Walnut Street entrance, and/or to the main desk in Room 200. If there is any possibility of injury, the person(s) involved should go to the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center for examination. If notified, the Department of Public Safety will assist in transporting the injured party. An accident report must be filed with the Building Administrator in writing within 48 hours.

Incidents involving theft, damage to property, suspicious activity, and/or persons, etc., should be reported to the Building Administrator (8-2996), the security officer at the Walnut Street entrance (8-1881), and/or a staff member in the main office (room 200/8-7041). Crimes in progress and crimes against persons or property should also be reported to the Department of Public Safety and the Building Administrator. The emergency number is 511 from any campus phone or 215-573-3333 from a cell phone or off campus. In case of a serious crime, the Department of Public Safety is always notified before the Philadelphia City Police are called. When in doubt, always call the emergency number first.

FACILITIES SCHEDULING

After classrooms are assigned for regularly scheduled ASC and University courses each semester, unused rooms may be available for meetings and events. To get information about scheduling classroom space or to book a room in the Annenberg School, please use Room Request. Regularly scheduled classes are prioritized over all special event requests. Generally, classes are not moved in favor of special events. Some events may have a rental, housekeeping, security, and/or AV charge. No meeting or event may be held in an unused room that has not been scheduled in advance (48 hours or more) with the Building Administrator. Last-minute requests and special events in general are planned at the discretion of the school administration. Space availability does not guarantee that a reservation will be accepted.

MAIL

United States mail is delivered to the School Monday through Friday (except on federal holidays). University internal mail is delivered each working day. Outgoing mail (both internal and U.S.) is picked up each working day by the University Mail Service. Outgoing mail not part of the school's official business will not be picked up unless the proper postage is affixed.

Individual mailboxes are provided to ASC faculty and full-time staff in the main office (Room 200). Every graduate student has a mailbox on the first floor of the school. The same key that opens a student's office opens the student mail closet. As they arrive, incoming mail, fax, and telephone messages are placed in mailboxes. Due to space limitations, boxes should be checked daily.

COPYRIGHTED WORKS (USE IN THE CLASSROOM)

The Annenberg School and the University of Pennsylvania are committed to compliance with federal guidelines regarding the duplication of copyrighted works for use in the classroom. Whenever necessary, the person requesting duplication should obtain the author's appropriate permission and ensure the copyright notice is included on each copy. Specific guidelines are discussed in the University of Pennsylvania Faculty/Staff Handbook.

FOOD AND BEVERAGES

Food and beverages are prohibited in ASC classrooms, media and research areas, or the library. Food and drinks are permitted in the ASC Graduate Student lounge (Room 103); in the Plaza Lobby, the school's designated public eating area; and in private offices. All members of the ASC community are expected to help ensure that this policy is carried out by setting a good example and reminding offenders of the school policy. Occasionally, special events will include food and drink in areas otherwise not permitted. Those occasions have been scheduled with the Events Coordinator or the Building Administrator. A professional caterer provides the food and drink in those instances, and the group sponsoring the event has paid a housekeeping charge to ensure that the area is cleaned up promptly.

ALCOHOL USE

Please see the University of Pennsylvania [Alcohol and Other Drug Policy](#).

SMOKING AND VAPING

Smoking and vaping are NOT permitted in the ASC building. The University is also a Tobacco-Free Campus. Please see the [Tobacco-Free Campus Policy](#).

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

Please reference the [UPenn Academic Resources website for any other University policies](#).