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The M.A. Program in Advertising

INTRODUCTION TO THE M.A. PROGRAM IN ADVERTISING

The following pages present the degree requirements and common procedures in the Department of Advertising Master of Arts program. This publication is designed to help you understand the basic steps in obtaining the graduate degree. Academic policies and procedures do change and we will do our best to keep you informed of and involved in any Departmental or Graduate School program changes. You should also refer to The Graduate School Catalog for important information.

Announcements of upcoming deadlines are emailed to students via an established advertising graduate listserv, maintained by the Graduate Coordinator. Substantial care is taken to inform individual students of particular requirements. However, students should stay informed about deadlines and enroll for appropriate courses. The University is a large institution with strict deadlines; failing to observe them usually means paying additional fees or delay in progress. Working closely with the Advertising Graduate Office will help insure timely and successful completion of the program.

Once admitted into the program, it is the responsibility of each graduate student to be informed about all requirements pertaining to his/her program of study.

PROGRAM PREREQUISITES

An entering student must hold a Bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution. All students must complete the following prerequisites prior to the first semester of the program.

- A basic statistics course
- A basic marketing course

In no case will on-the-job experience substitute for these courses. These courses provide the necessary background for graduate-level work in advertising.
BASIC PROGRAM
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE M.A.

The degrees combine conceptual and theoretical underpinnings with knowledge about the practical aspects of advertising and the business environment within which it operates. All graduate students share the responsibility of maintaining at least a 3.0 GPA throughout their tenure at the University. It is required that the majority of all graduate work will be done in Austin, and the University expects students to be continuously registered as a full time student while in the graduate program.
The M.A. Program Options

There are two Master’s degree options offered to prepare the student for a successful career in the advertising business or future graduate work.

The M.A. program requires 36 to 39 hours beyond the Bachelor’s degree. The M.A. with thesis option requires 36 hours, and the M.A. with no thesis option requires 39 hours.

The degrees require minor coursework of at least 6 hours. Minor courses need not be in a single discipline. For example, one minor course might be taken in marketing and another in journalism. At least two minor courses and at least two electives must be completed in all of the options.

Master’s Degree with Thesis
This degree program consists of 36 semester hours, at least 30 of which must be at the graduate level. The 36 hours will include the thesis, ADV 698A preceding ADV 698B. Students must be registered for the thesis (ADV 698B) course the semester in which the thesis is completed. No more than 6 semester hours of upper-division undergraduate courses are permitted in the 36 hour program.

Students choosing the Master’s degree with thesis option must complete an extended research project developed and completed during the ADV 698A and ADV 698B graduate courses. Research completed for the thesis should be original research, exhibiting a sound theoretical foundation, where data are gathered and analyzed, and results are reported and discussed. Thesis research topics should pose and attempt to answer a novel research question that will contribute to knowledge in the discipline. The thesis must follow the approved format set by the Graduate School and must be approved by the Supervisor, Reader, and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Minor courses are outside of advertising and elective courses are in advertising.
The thesis must meet all requirements for form set by the Graduate School. The thesis must, in the opinion of the Supervisor and Reader:

a. exhibit a sound theoretical foundation
b. display analytical and/or problem-solving competence
c. be structurally and grammatically acceptable
d. be of high overall quality

**Master's Degree w/o Thesis**
At least 39 semester hours of coursework are required. The program must include at least 30 hours of graduate coursework. Students must be registered the semester they file to graduate.

**Minor or Supporting Work**
Master’s students are required to complete at least 9 hours of minor coursework. Courses fulfilling this requirement may be from different departments, but they must represent a coherent program of study. Courses chosen for Minor work should support the student’s area of study.

**Additional Rules Governing Master’s Coursework**
No more than 9 semester hours of upper-division coursework may be included. The grades earned in the undergraduate courses will count toward the graduate GPA. No undergraduate advertising classes may be taken unless approved by the Graduate Advisor.

Up to 6 hours of coursework may be taken as “Credit/No Credit” (or Pass/Fail for upper-division undergraduate courses). The option applies only to minor courses. All advertising core courses and electives (as well as any background courses) must be taken for a letter grade.

A minimum of a “C” must be earned for course credit. A “C-” will not count for course credit.

In order to have Master’s candidacy approved a student must have a “3.0” GPA or above in the major and in the minor areas, as well as a “3.0” average overall.
Thesis Guidelines

The thesis and should consist of evidence of research capability and design, and a written presentation of that research exhibiting communicative skills expected of a Master’s candidate. Because it is the belief that both research and presentation of this research may vary widely in both type and scope, the following will satisfy this requirement.

Supervising Committee
The Supervising Committee normally consists of two persons, a Supervisor and a Reader, who must be members of a Graduate Studies Committee. It is permissible to have a Reader from outside the Department of Advertising. The Supervisor should be a faculty member with an interest and/or expertise in the area selected for the Thesis research. Typically, the Reader should be selected in consultation with the supervising professor and should be a faculty member with an interest and/or expertise in some facet of the area of research.

Length of Project
The thesis should be of sufficient length to adequately and completely answer the question or address the problem posed for the research. Typically, students submit a short written proposal (of no more than 2-3 pages) to the supervising professor. While discussing this proposal with the supervising professor, issues like the scope of the project, suggested research methods, and how these relate to the overall length of the finished project should be addressed. Each student should work closely with the supervising professor to reach agreement on what is expected of the final project.
Advising
The Graduate Adviser is the overall director of Graduate Studies within the Department of Advertising. She/he approves the student’s course selections each semester as well as all formal documents during the student’s program of study. The Advertising Graduate Office maintains student records and helps to ensure that students are aware of program requirements. Each student is required to consult the Graduate Adviser prior to registration each semester so that advising bars may be cleared.

An online advising site (https://utdirect.utexas.edu/avgadv/) is available to facilitate the process. Since registration is a busy time, students should feel free to see the Graduate Adviser throughout the semester to discuss more in-depth academic planning.

Role of the Graduate Adviser
The Graduate Adviser is a Department of Advertising faculty member who is elected by the Advertising faculty and appointed by the Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies to represent the Graduate School in all matters pertaining to the graduate program in the Department. The Graduate Adviser consults with newly admitted students and monitors the progress of all graduate students. The Graduate Adviser is the first step in the process of approval for administrative matters and advises students on all academic matters.

Role of the Graduate Coordinator
The Graduate Coordinator plays a vital role in day-to-day operations of the Department’s graduate program. Responsibilities include the initiation, coordination, and facilitation of services, programs and procedures in such a way that the graduate student receives individual attention and the opportunity to become familiar with and functional within the University. The Graduate Coordinator is familiar with the University and Departmental policy concerning application, admission, registration, candidacy and graduation and informs and assists students in dealing with these policies. This involves close coordination with the Graduate School, Graduate and International Admission Center, the Office of the Dean of the College of Communication, the Department of Advertising administration, the International Office, the Graduate Outreach Program, and any other offices on campus with which a student might need assistance. The Graduate Coordinator distributes information about the program, handles petitions and special requests, assists with registration, maintains student files, and compiles statistics. The Graduate Coordinator often serves both in administrative and counseling capacities.
Advertising Graduate Council (AGC)
This motivated and enthusiastic student-run organization serves the needs of graduate Advertising students. Its purpose is to maximize the Graduate School experience and to increase the employment prospects of Advertising graduate students. AGC's primary strategy is to gain positive exposure for Advertising graduate students and the Department of Advertising, both within the University community as well as with prospective and former students, advertising agencies, and advertisers. Some regular activities and services include a monthly general meeting, visits to local agencies, discussions with local advertising executives, community service projects, and trips to major cities and their national, front-running ad agencies. AGC membership is voluntary and requires a small fee per semester.
Online Registration
The exact steps for graduate registration are specified each semester in the University of Texas Course Schedule (found online at http://registrar.utexas.edu/schedules/). All Advertising students are expected to be continuously registered. The Advertising graduate registration procedure involves visiting the online advising site (https://utdirect.utexas.edu/avgadv/) and consulting with the Graduate Adviser about the student’s plans and overall program progress. Once the Adviser and student are satisfied with the student’s plans for the term, an electronic form is returned to the Graduate Coordinator and any routine advising bars are cleared. Bars pertaining to library and other fines cannot be cleared by the Advertising Graduate Office. Once all bars are cleared, the student is able to use the University’s online system to complete registration. Nine hours are considered full-time in the long semesters but some students take 12 hours.

Late Registration
Students are expected to make every effort to register in accordance with the University of Texas Course Schedule. The Graduate School is generally averse to student requests for late registration. A late fee is administered.

A “Registration and Payment” schedule link is available in the menu to the left of any Course Schedule page. Being familiar with this schedule will help students know payment deadlines and to avoid late fees.

Re-entry After an Inactive Period
If a continuing student is not enrolled for one long semester (i.e., Fall or Spring), she or he must apply to the University for permission to re-enter. The Readmission Application and deadlines is available on-line. Although a student may be given permission to re-enter by the Graduate School, this decision is not official or complete without the approval of the Graduate Adviser.

If a new student registers and withdraws before the 12th class day of the first semester, he or she must reapply for admission to the Graduate School or have his or her original admission extended by petition from the Graduate Adviser to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Adds/Drops
Adds/Drops occur according to the times and dates published in the University of Texas Course Schedule. The student must consult the specific requirements of the department in which a course is being added or dropped in order to determine what procedure to follow. In the case of Advertising courses, adds and drops must be approved by the Graduate Adviser.

During the first through 12th day of class, Adds/Drops are conducted through the Department of Advertising Office. Prior approval by the Graduate Adviser is required. After the 12th class day in Spring
and Fall semester or after the 4th class day in Summer Session permission must be petitioned to the Graduate School to add or drop a course and a penalty is assessed for registration after the twelfth class day. Official enrollment for the Fall and Spring semesters is determined on the 12th class day (4th class day in Summer). Late adds and drops require substantial record-keeping and accounting.

The deadline for changing the Credit/No Credit status of a course is later in the semester and approval of the Graduate Adviser is required. Consult the University of Texas Academic Calendar for deadlines. Add/Drop forms can be obtained from the Advertising Graduate Office or the University Office of Graduate Studies (MAI 101).

**Withdrawal**
Dropping an entire course load constitutes withdrawal from the University. A student must contact the Graduate Adviser before contacting the Graduate Dean about withdrawing.
Requirements for the M.A. Degrees

Transfer of Credit
It is University policy that no course counted toward another graduate degree may apply toward a Master’s degree. The University prohibits credit transfers from foreign universities. A maximum of six hours of graduate work receiving a grade of “A” or “B” may be petitioned for transfer from another university to apply to the M.A. degree.

Remaining in Good Standing
Students not meeting the minimum requirements of the Graduate School (i.e., falling below a 3.0 average) will receive a “warning” letter and be on probation for one semester during which time they must bring their grade point up to a 3.0. If a student fails to obtain a 3.0 average after this semester, the University will dismiss the student from the Graduate School.

Scholastic Dishonesty
The professional lives of graduates of any academic department are related to the reputation of the institution from which they graduate. Scholastic honesty and integrity are an integral part of that reputation. In the Department of Advertising, students are expected to uphold the highest levels of scholastic integrity. The University of Texas at Austin’s “Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities,” Appendix C, Section 11-801 (in the General Information Bulletin) states:

The University expects all students to maintain absolute integrity and a high standard of individual honor in scholastic work, and to observe standards of conduct appropriate for a community of scholars.

A student accused of scholastic dishonesty may be subject to disciplinary proceedings initiated by a faculty member or dean, and may be subject to severe penalties. Scholastic dishonesty can result in a failing grade, or even suspension from The University.

Scholastic Dishonesty is defined in the Bulletin to include, but not limited to, (1) cheating, (2) plagiarism, (3) collusion, or (4) falsifying records. In addition to the definitions provided in the Bulletin, students should be aware that the Department of Advertising has defined plagiarism to include:

(a) Submitting a paper, creative work, or other class assignment as your own when, in fact, it (or any part of it) was done by someone else;

(b) Copying material authored by another person, word-for-word, without putting that material in quotations and citing the source;
(c) Copying the general idea or thesis of another person, even if you paraphrase, without citing the source.

As a general rule of thumb, if you take more than three (3) words in a row from material authored by another person, you must put it in quotation marks and provide a proper citation. Copying the words of another person in order to assure that your grammar or writing style is appropriate is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism. You may discuss the ideas of others, but you must arrive at theses, hypotheses, or conclusions on your own, i.e., you must express original ideas that are yours and yours alone.

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, or any other form of Scholastic Dishonesty, ask your instructor or faculty adviser. Students are responsible for their own conduct and for reporting any violations to their instructor or other member of the Department of Advertising faculty.

Incomplete Grades in Classes
The Department of Advertising and the University Office of Graduate Studies strongly discourage students from delaying completion of work required by specific courses. When students take “Incompletes” (“X” on transcripts) for courses, they jeopardize their ability to obtain fellowships and University appointments. In the Department of Advertising, having more than one “X” from the previous long-term session renders the student ineligible for a teaching assistantship, for example.

The student has one semester in which to remove an “X” and students are urged to be very clear with instructors on what must be done, and by when, to complete course requirements.

If a student takes a course, and later decides not to complete it, the student is urged to consider withdrawing from that course in order to clear his or her academic record (the “Q” grade for quit is reported by the instructor).

Time Limitations
A M.A. student must complete all requirements for a Master’s degree within a 6 year period. Work older than six years can be reinstated only with special permission of the Dean of Graduate Studies upon recommendation of the Graduate Adviser. A special petition must originate from the Graduate Adviser. Approval of these petitions is rare.

Graduation
All forms, instructions and deadlines necessary for graduation are available on the Graduate School website under “Candidacy.”

Information on graduation ceremonies is also available on the Graduate School website under “Graduation and Convocation.”

Specific information about Candidacy and Graduation is available in the Advertising Graduate Office.
Fellowships, Assistantships, and Financial Aid

**University of Texas Fellowships**
The Graduate School provides a limited number of university fellowships to graduate students. Fellowships are awarded competitively on a basis of academic merit, as represented in undergraduate records, previous graduate study, letters of recommendation, and GRE scores, with financial need considered where academic merit is equal. Inquiries about other financial assistance, such as loans and work/study opportunities, should be directed to:

The Office of Student Financial Services
The University of Texas at Austin
http://finaid.utexas.edu/

**Scholarships**
The Moody College of Communication scholarship application is open to admitted and continuing students. By completing the application, students are considered for any of the scholarships for which they are eligible. Please visit the website for application details, scholarship criteria and application dates, http://moody.utexas.edu/students/scholarship

For more information about fellowships, scholarships & TA applications:
http://advertising.utexas.edu/graduate/

**Teaching Assistantships**
The Advertising Department awards a very limited number of graduate teaching assistantships. Ph.D. students are given priority and are guaranteed funding for the first three years of study.