



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

# Digital Media M.A. Graduate Program Handbook

**Nicholson School of Communication and Media**

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# Digital Media M.A.

Together, the College of Graduate Studies (CGS) [Graduate Student Handbook](#) and the Digital Media M.A. program handbook should serve as your main guide throughout your graduate career. The CGS Handbook includes university information, policies, requirements and guidance for all graduate students. The DM M.A. handbook describes the details about graduate study and requirements in our specific program. While both handbooks are wonderful resources, know that you are always welcome to talk with faculty and staff in your program and in the Graduate College.

The central activities and missions of a university rest upon the fundamental assumption that all members of the university community conduct themselves in accordance with a strict adherence to academic and scholarly integrity. As a graduate student and member of the university community, you are expected to display the highest standards of academic and personal integrity.

Here are some resources to help you better understand your responsibilities:

- [Academic Honesty](#)
- [Academic Integrity Training](#) - Open to all graduate students at no cost
- [Plagiarism](#)

## Introduction

The M.A. program in Digital Media engages students in theoretical frameworks, methods, and critical media practice related to computational, interactive media. Through rigorous creative and research projects, the M.A. prepares students for continued study in a Ph.D. program or employment within the industry. Working closely with an innovative faculty and technology partnerships in downtown Orlando, students will employ emerging technologies to communicate interactive narratives and experiences, while also producing cutting-edge research in interactive media.

The Digital Media M.A. combines theory and practice to train the next generation of interactive media scholars and practitioners. Part of the first wave of UCF's state-of-the-art downtown campus, students in this program have unique opportunities to participate in socially impactful research and artistic production. In the first year, students gain an introduction to aesthetic, theoretical, programming, and design approaches to interactive media, while gaining valuable foundations in research and storytelling. In the second year, students either pursue a thesis or creative studio production path, while learning about contemporary topics and emerging research and design. Throughout the program, students are encouraged to create portfolio-ready pieces and/or present their work at conferences, thus preparing them for future professional, artistic, and scholarly success at the forefront of interactive media.

# Curriculum

Please visit the Graduate Catalog to see the current curriculum for our program.

## Timeline for Completion

Example timeline for full-time students:

Year One (18 hours)	
Fall	Spring
DIG 6647 History & Theory of Interactive Media (3 hours) DIG 5487 Media Aesthetics (3 hours) DIG 5508 Programming for Digital Media (3 hours)	DIG 6551 Theory & Practice of Interactive Storytelling (3 hours) DIG 6136 Design for Interactive Media (3 hours) DIG 6825 Research Methods for Interactive Media (3 hours)
<b>Semester Total: 9 credit hours</b>	<b>Semester Total: 9 credit hours</b>
Year Two (18 hours)	
Fall	Spring
DIG 6971 Thesis OR DIG 6524 Studio 1 (3 hours) DIG 6817 Contemporary Topics in Digital Media (3 hours) Elective (and COM, DIG, FIL prefix or other as approved by the graduate coordinator) (3 hours)	DIG 6971 Thesis OR DIG 6528 Studio 2 (3 hours) DIG 5831 Computational Media (3 hours) Elective (and COM, DIG, FIL prefix or other as approved by the graduate coordinator) (3 hours)
<b>Semester Total: 9 credit hours</b>	<b>Semester Total: 9 credit hours</b>
<b>Total Credit Hours: 36 credit hours</b>	

# Committee Requirements

Regardless of their intended track, students are required to assemble a faculty committee to supervise their work by the end of the first year. The student should approach a faculty member about being their adviser with a preliminary proposal of what the thesis or studio project will be. Once the adviser has agreed, the rest of the committee should be selected in consultation with the adviser. **Students should select an adviser and supporting committee that is appropriate, in terms of subject matter, methodological, or other expertise for their intended thesis or studio project.**

At a minimum, this committee will meet with the student once each in the spring of their first year, the fall of their second year, and the spring of the second year. Before enrolling in thesis/studio credit the committee must review and approve a 1-page concept document that gives an overview of the student's thesis/studio project. In addition, students may not enroll in thesis/studio credit until they have signed a master's degree mentorship compact (see below).

# Thesis Requirements

The thesis option is strongly recommended for students who intend to pursue a Ph.D. degree.

## Committee

The committee must be chaired by a member of the Games and Interactive Media (GaIM) graduate faculty and includes 3 total members, two of which must be GaIM graduate faculty. One committee member may be external to GaIM, as appropriate to the student's work.

Thesis committees must be approved by the College of Graduate Studies Dean using the Electronic Thesis Advisory Committee Form. Thesis committee members external to UCF must be approved as Graduate Faculty Scholars by the College of Graduate Studies. Students may inquire about Graduate Faculty Scholars and receive the Electronic Thesis Advisory Committee Form by contacting the NSCM Graduate Admissions Specialist ([nicholsongrad@ucf.edu](mailto:nicholsongrad@ucf.edu)).

## Prospectus

Thesis students must submit a thesis prospectus and preliminary bibliography (9-12 pages) on a topic selected in consultation with the advisor. The formal thesis is initiated by the preparation of a proposal that meets both departmental and university requirements for the thesis. The members of the student's thesis committee judge the proposal as the preliminary step to beginning the thesis. This committee must approve the Thesis Proposal during the first semester of thesis credit.

## Thesis Guidelines

The thesis is a formal written document.

The introduction gives an overview of the project and its purpose; includes a literature review that explains and cites previous research on the topic of the thesis or related topics, in order to situate the project in its scholarly context; and explains the method the student used in conducting the project.

The body of the thesis explains what was learned through the project and any evaluation that was performed. Examples include, but are not limited to, textual, procedural, or formal analysis of a game or interactive media text, interviews or surveys with makers or users of games or interactive media products, or design and user testing of a game or interactive media product.

The conclusion of the thesis includes plans for future work.

If your research includes human subjects such as with interviews or surveys, you must abide by UCF requirements regarding IRB approval. Consult your advisor for assistance with the [required IRB training](#) and submission of an application.

## Steps to Submit Thesis and Graduate

The thesis also includes an archival copy of any resulting creative product. Both the thesis and any creative product must be delivered in digital form, acceptable by the UCF Library according to its standards for digital dissertations and thesis.

The following requirements must be met by thesis students in their final term:

- Submit a properly formatted file for initial format review by the format review deadline
- Submit the Thesis and Dissertation Release Option form well before the defense
- Defend by the defense deadline
- Receive format approval (if not granted upon initial review)
- Submit signed thesis approval form by final submission deadline
- Submit final thesis/dissertation document by final submission deadline

Students must format their thesis according to the standards outlined in [Thesis and Dissertation Webcourse](#). Formatting questions or issues can be submitted to the Format Help page in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. Format reviews and final submission must be completed in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site.

The College of Graduate Studies offers several thesis and dissertation [Workshops](#) each term. Students are highly encouraged to attend these workshops early in the thesis process to fully understand the above policies and procedures.

The College of Graduate Studies thesis and dissertation office is best reached by email at [editor@ucf.edu](mailto:editor@ucf.edu).

All university deadlines are listed in the [Academic Calendar](#). The College of Sciences (COS) and/or the Nicholson School of Communication and Media (NSCM) may have other earlier deadlines; please check with your program coordinator or program assistant for additional deadlines.

Please visit the College of Graduate Studies [Thesis and Dissertation \(ETD\)](#) webpage for information about general graduate policies, deadlines, processes, formatting resources, workshops and campus resources, copyright, binding vendors, and a final semester checklist.

# Studio Concentration Requirements (Non-Thesis beginning Fall 2019)

## Committee

Studio committees must be approved by the GaIM Graduate Committee using the designated form. The committee must be chaired by a member of the Games and Interactive Media graduate faculty and includes at least 2 total members. One committee member may be external to GaIM, as appropriate to the student's work. Students may receive this form from the NSCM Graduate Admissions Specialist ([nicholsongrad@ucf.edu](mailto:nicholsongrad@ucf.edu)).

## Proposal

Studio option students must submit a studio project proposal and preliminary bibliography (4-8 pages) on a topic selected in consultation with the advisor. The creative project is initiated by the preparation of a proposal that includes an explanation of the expected outcome and underlying concepts of the project. The members of the student's studio committee judge the proposal as the preliminary step to beginning the creative project. The student should submit the Studio Proposal during the first half of the first semester of studio credit. At the end of the first semester of studio credit, the student will submit their Studio 1 prototype to the committee for approval to proceed to Studio 2.

## Studio Project Guidelines

Students who choose the Studio track will complete the DIG 6524: Studio 1/DIG 6528: Studio 2 course sequence. The first part of the two-semester sequence will prepare students for project management, conceptualization, and prototyping related to an intensive digital project they will produce to satisfy the studio requirement for the degree. Students will produce a project proposal and timeline, concept and design documentation, and a prototype. They will also engage in several critique sessions throughout the term.

In the second part of the two-course sequence, students will build upon the concept development and prototyping in Studio 1 to produce a polished final project. They will also generate professional portfolio quality documentation of their project. This documentation will be used in applications for a public exhibition, showcase, and/or conference.

As part of the degree requirement for the studio track, students will be expected to exhibit their completed project through a public facing event. The context and scope of the exhibition will be decided upon by the student in agreement with their advisor and committee. The showcase of student work may take the form of an exhibition, festival, conference, or a participatory, online format; acceptance to an internally or externally juried or peer reviewed exhibition/festival/conference will fulfill this requirement.

## Steps to Submit Studio Project

The studio project also includes an archival copy of the creative product. A documentation website and/or video of the creative product must be delivered in digital form to the committee chair.

The following requirements must be met by studio students in their final term:

- Submit a preliminary copy of the digital project file for initial review by the university thesis format review deadline
- Hold their public exhibition by the end of the semester
- Submit signed project approval form by final university submission deadline

- Submit final studio product by the university thesis submission deadline

All university deadlines are listed in the Academic Calendar. The College of Sciences (COS) and/or the Nicholson School of Communication and Media (NSCM) may have other earlier deadlines; please check with your program coordinator or program assistant for additional deadlines.

## **Compact Between Master's Students and Their Advisors**

Graduate training entails formal education in a specific discipline and research or creative production experience in which the student trains under the supervision of one or more faculty mentors. A positive mentoring relationship between the graduate student and the primary advisor is a vital component of the student's preparation for future careers and mentoring roles.

Individuals who pursue a graduate degree embark on a path of lifelong learning and are expected to take responsibility for their professional learning and development from the onset. Graduate students must take ownership of their progress through their program. This means seeking guidance on and knowledge about course requirements and program requirements, policies, and procedures. Students must commit to working on an individual development plan. Faculty members who advise students—with the backing of the graduate program and institution—fulfill the role of mentor, which includes providing disciplinary training, guidance, and instruction in the responsible and ethical conduct of research and creative work. The faculty advisor serves as a disciplinary and professional role model for the student. In addition, the advisor and the program more generally offer encouragement as the student prepares and pursues their individual development plan and facilitates the experiences and professional skills development essential for a broad set of career paths.

## **Core Tenets of Graduate Training**

### **Institutional Commitment**

Graduate institutions must be committed to establishing and maintaining rigorous programs with the highest disciplinary and ethical standards. Institutions should work to ensure that students who complete their programs possess the foundational knowledge, skills, and values that will allow them to mature into professionals of integrity. Institutions have oversight of the graduate curricula, length of study, stipend levels, benefits, career guidance, grievance procedures, and other matters relevant to the education of graduate students (e.g., consideration of, preparation for, and exposure to various career paths). Institutions recognize and reward their graduate faculty. With changing and diversified workforce needs, institutions need to recognize the necessity of faculty development around multiple career paths for students and provide opportunities for faculty to acquire such skills and experiences. Additionally, institutions need to foster an environment that is diverse and inclusive.

### **Program Commitment**

Graduate programs establish training that prepares students with broad and deep knowledge and the technical, professional, and leadership skills necessary for a successful career in their field of study. Programs should closely monitor the progress of graduate students during their course of study by establishing milestones and clear parameters for outcomes assessment, as well as maintain and make available career outcomes data.

## Quality Mentoring

Effective mentoring is crucial for graduate students as they begin their future careers. Faculty mentors must commit to dedicating substantial time to the disciplinary, professional, and personal development of graduate students. Whether a faculty member acts as the primary advisor or sits on a student's advisory committee, a relationship of mutual trust and respect between mentor and graduate student is essential for healthy interactions and to encourage individual growth. Effective mentoring should include teaching appropriate methodologies and/or techniques, providing regular feedback in the form of positive support and constructive criticism to foster individual growth, teaching the "ways" of the discipline, and promoting careers by providing or directing students to appropriate opportunities. The best mentors are careful listeners who actively promote and appreciate diversity. They possess and consistently maintain high ethical standards, acknowledge and recognize the contributions of students—in publications and intellectual property, for example—and have an established record of research and/or creative accomplishments. Finally, it should be recognized that mentoring does not end with a student's completion of the graduate program but continues throughout the student's professional life.

## Skill Sets and Counseling for a Broad Range of Career Choices

The institution, training programs, and mentors should provide training relevant to a broad variety of careers that will allow graduate students to appreciate, navigate, discuss, and develop career choices. Effective and regular career guidance activities should be offered.

## Commitments of Graduate Students

**I acknowledge that I have the primary responsibility for the successful completion of my degree.** I will be committed to my graduate education and will demonstrate this by my efforts in the classroom, the research and/or studio space and all other related academic and professional activities. I will maintain a high level of professionalism, self-motivation, initiative, engagement, curiosity, and ethical standards, including complying with institutional and departmental standards for contributing to an inclusive environment. **I will meet regularly with my advisor to provide updates on the progress and results of my course work, research and/or creative work, and professional and career development activities.**

**I will work with my advisor to develop a thesis/studio project.** This will include establishing a timeline for each phase of my work. I will strive to keep engaged with the work, discuss findings and any pitfalls, and meet the established goals and deadlines.

**I will work with my advisor to select a thesis/studio committee.** I will commit to meeting with the members of this committee each semester. I will discuss my progress to date and be responsive to the advice and constructive criticism from my committee.

**I will be a good citizen of the program and School.** I agree to take respect and help maintain shared workspaces. I will follow posted rules and guidelines for these spaces and help maintain the security of these spaces. I will maintain a professional demeanor in these spaces and through my personal conduct I will contribute to an environment that is safe, equitable, and free of harassment.

**If serving as a GTA, I will be aware of and follow university, college, and program and School policies. As needed, I will discuss policies on work hours and medical leave, with my graduate program and any faculty member that I am assigned to assist.** I will consult with the faculty members that I am assigned to and, if necessary, the graduate program coordinator in advance of any planned absences. I will apprise the faculty members that I am assigned to of any unexpected absences due to illness or other issues.

**I will discuss policies on authorship and attendance at professional meetings with my program and thesis advisors.**

**I will be knowledgeable of the policies and requirements of my graduate program, graduate school, and institution.** I will commit to meeting these requirements in the appropriate time frame and will abide by all institutional policies and procedures.

**I will attend and actively participate in School/program meetings, seminars, and other events that are part of my educational program.** I will seek out other enrichment opportunities, such as participation in professional organizations and meetings, both at UCF and in the wider profession.

**I will be knowledgeable of all institutional research policies.** I will comply with all institutional human subjects research policies. As appropriate, I will participate in my institution's Responsible Conduct of Research Training Program and practice the guidelines presented therein while conducting my research. I will also seek input on and comply with institutional policies regarding my research design and data analysis.

**I acknowledge that I have the primary responsibility for the development of my own career.** I recognize that I need to explore career opportunities and paths that match and develop my individual skills, values, and interests to achieve my desired career goals. I understand that there are tools such as the individual development plan that I should use to help me define my career goals and develop my training plan. I will seek guidance throughout my graduate education from my research advisor, career counseling services, thesis/ dissertation committee, other mentors, and any other resources that can offer advice on career planning and the wide range of opportunities available in the discipline's workforce.

## **Commitments of Graduate Advisors**

**While serving as a graduate student's advisor or mentor, I will be supportive, equitable, accessible, encouraging, and respectful.** I will foster the graduate student's professional confidence and encourage intellectual development, critical thinking, curiosity, and creativity. I will continue my interest and involvement as the student moves forward into a career.

**I will be committed to meeting one-on-one with the student on a regular basis. I will regularly review the student's progress and provide timely feedback and goal-setting advice.**

**I will be committed to the graduate student's research/studio project.** I will work with the student to help plan and guide the research/studio project, set reasonable and attainable goals, and establish a timeline for completion of the project.

**I will help the graduate student select a thesis/studio committee.** I will assure that this committee meets at least once each semester to review and discuss the graduate student's progress and future directions. I understand that the function of this committee is to help the student complete the proposed research or studio project, and I will respect the ideas and suggestions of my colleagues on the committee.

**I will provide an environment that is intellectually stimulating, emotionally supportive, safe, equitable, and free of harassment.**

**I will demonstrate respect for all graduate students as individuals without regard to gender, race, national origin, religion, disability, or sexual orientation, and I will cultivate a culture of tolerance among all of my students.**

**I will be knowledgeable of and follow institutional policies that relate to reporting responsibilities such as those associated with Title IX violations and student and academic misconduct.**

**I will assist my advisees in pursuing financial resources, as appropriate and according to my institution's guidelines, to conduct thesis/studio work.**

**I will discuss with the graduate student authorship policies regarding papers or exhibits.** I will acknowledge the graduate student's contributions when they provide assistance and will acknowledge their contribution as a co-author when the work is collaborative. I will provide assistance and guidance to the student as they are preparing to publish their research or exhibit their creative work.

**I will be knowledgeable of and guide the graduate student through the requirements and deadlines of the graduate program and the institution, as well as teaching requirements, if any, will refer them to HR and other offices as appropriate.**

**I will encourage the graduate student to attend and present their research and creative work at conferences.**

**I will promote the training of the graduate student in professional skills needed for a successful career. These skills include but are not limited to oral and written communication, grant writing, management and leadership, collaborative research and/or creative work, responsible conduct of research and/or creative work.** I will encourage the student to seek opportunities to develop skills in other areas, even if not specifically required by the student's program. I will also encourage the graduate student to seek input from multiple mentors.

**I will create an environment in which the student can discuss and explore career opportunities and paths that match their skills, values, and interests and be supportive of their career path choices.** I will be accessible to give advice and feedback on career goals. I will work with the student on an individual development plan to help define career goals and identify training milestones. I will provide letters of recommendation for the student's next phase of professional development.

## **Examination Requirements (Non-Thesis for Fall 2018 and prior)**

Non-thesis students who began before Fall 2019 and did not change to the new curriculum will take a comprehensive examination during the semester they intend to graduate. Students in the new curriculum do not have a comprehensive examination. The examination process is designed to evaluate both students' basic knowledge and competencies, and their ability to synthesize and apply what they know in depth—that is, both the breadth and depth of student learning in the program. It is not intended to test specific course content for which students have already been evaluated and graded. The exam is designed to test the student's ability to respond and substantiate the response in a professional and educated fashion.

On the exam, students will be given 4 questions and asked to **choose 2** to answer by writing **5-7 page answers** (double-spaced). The exam will be administered approximately halfway through the semester during which the student plans to graduate and will take place over a 4-hour period in a quiet room on campus. A detailed rubric and suggested reading list will be provided to all students planning to take the exam on or before the beginning of the term they will take the exam. The exam uses a three-step scale: High Pass; Pass with Revisions; and No Credit. An overall evaluation (across both questions) of High Pass means the student passes the exam outright; Pass with Revisions requires the student to revise the exam and resubmit before the end of the semester; and No Credit is a fail and requires the student to wait until the next term before either re-taking the exam or undergoing an oral defense. Students may only attempt the exam twice, and, if on the second attempt the student still receives a No Credit score, the student will be dismissed from the program.

## **Graduate Research**

Research is such a vital part of graduate education. The development of research skills and the practice of good research ethics begins with graduate study. Below are some general policies and resources.

Research Policies and Ethics Information: UCF's Office of Research & Commercialization ensures the UCF community complies with local, state and federal regulations that relate to research. For polices including required Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval when conducting research involving human subjects (e.g. surveys),

animal research, conflict of interest and general responsible conduct of research, please see their website: <https://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance.html>.

Students should also be aware of and informed about policies related to Proprietary and Confidential Information found in the Graduate Catalog (Provide an introduction and direct website link to the [Proprietary and Confidential Information](#) section in the Graduate Catalog.

You also should be aware of [UCF's Patent and Invention Policy](#): In most cases, UCF owns the intellectual property developed using university resources. The graduate student, as inventor, will, according to this policy, share in the proceeds of the invention.

Students will also learn how to conduct research as part of a required research methods course, during which they will learn, among other topics, how to write a research study and conduct responsible human subjects research. Additionally, you may be interested in exploring Pathways workshops on library research, CITI Training, and writing essentials on your own.

## Financial Support

Digital Media M.A. students are eligible for different kinds of support:

**Need-based assistance:** The University provides need-based scholarships funded by the federal government. These are based on financial need as determined by the FAFSA form and are awarded in the middle of April. We encourage all students to complete a FAFSA application form online at [fafsa.ed.gov](https://fafsa.ed.gov).

**Fellowships:** These competitive, merit-based awards are usually reserved for newly admitted students. These awards pay a stipend and/or provide a tuition waiver. To be eligible, students must have their completed application on file by January 15. To view a list of fellowships and the eligibility requirements please visit: [graduate.ucf.edu/fellowships/](https://graduate.ucf.edu/fellowships/).

**Research and Teaching Opportunities:** You may have the opportunity to obtain experience as a graduate assistant, grader, graduate teaching assistant, instructor of record, or graduate research assistant. We recommend that you take advantage of these opportunities as they become available to you.

## Graduate Student Associations

**The Conference of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS)** is an organization of over 200 graduate schools across the southern region of the United States. Its purpose is to consider topics relating to graduate study and research which are of mutual interest and concern to the member institutions. [www.csgs.org](http://www.csgs.org)

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is UCF's graduate organization committed to enrich graduate students' personal, educational and professional experience. To learn more or get involved, please visit [facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/](https://facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/). For individual department or graduate program organizations, please see program advisor.

## Professional Development

### Pathways to Success Workshops

Coordinated by the College of Graduate Studies, the Pathways to Success program offers the following free development opportunities for graduate students including workshops about academic integrity, research, and CITI training. For more information and how to register, please visit <https://graduate.ucf.edu/pathways-to-success/>. Some workshop titles that may be useful and of interest to students include: Lacking Experience or Changing Careers? Combination Resumes that Work; Where to Publish and Authors Rights; How it Works for You: Networking Techniques; Building an Online Brand; and Create a Professional Portfolio.

## Support for Research Presentations

The College of Graduate Studies also offers Presentation Fellowships to enrolled master's, specialist, and doctoral students to share their research at a professional meeting. For requirements and application deadlines, see [Presentation Fellowship](#).

In addition, the Nicholson School of Communication and Media (NSCM) offers limited travel funding to students who will present at academic conferences or present their work in a juried exhibition or other creative venue. Contact the Graduate Admissions Specialist in NSCM ([nicholsongrad@ucf.edu](mailto:nicholsongrad@ucf.edu)) for more information on how to apply.

## Scholarly Publications

Scholarly publications are not required for the M.A. degree but are advisable for all students who want to pursue the thesis track, as well as for those who want to pursue further graduate study. For more information about how to pursue these opportunities, consult with a faculty member, a member of your thesis committee, or the Graduate Program Coordinator.

## Departmental Awards via College and University

The university provides several achievement awards:

### Graduate Excellence Awards

Each year, students can submit a portfolio for nomination of College and University level awards of excellence. These are intended to showcase student excellence in academic achievement, teaching, research, leadership, and community service.

- **Award for Excellence by a Graduate Teaching Assistant** - This award is intended for students who provide teaching support and assistance under the direction of a lead teacher. This award focuses on the extent and quality of the assistance provided by the student to the lead instructor and the students in the class. (This award is not intended for students who are teachers of record.)
- **Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching** - This award is for students who serve as teachers of record and have independent classroom responsibilities. The focus of this award is on the quality of the student's teaching and the academic contributions of those activities.
- **Award for the Outstanding Master's Thesis** - This award recognizes graduate students for excellence in the master's thesis. The focus is on the quality and contribution of the student's thesis research. Excellence of the master's thesis may be demonstrated by evidence such as (but not limited to): publications in refereed or peer reviewed journals, the candidates' juried exhibitions and awards record, recognitions and awards from professional organizations, and praise from faculty members and other colleagues in the field. The university award will be forwarded to a national-level competition sponsored by the Council of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) when the thesis discipline corresponds to the annual submission request.

For more information about these awards, please see the College of [Graduate Studies website](#).

In addition, the Nicholson School of Communication and Media (NSCM) offers graduate student awards. Consult with the Graduate Admissions Specialist in NSCM ([nicholsongrad@ucf.edu](mailto:nicholsongrad@ucf.edu)) for more information on applying.

For more information about the Council of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) thesis and dissertation awards, please see their website: [csgs.org/](http://csgs.org/).

# Job Search

## Career Services and Experiential Learning

Graduate career development issues are unique and include evaluating academic and non-academic career choices, discussing graduate school effect on career choices, as well as learning, evaluating, and refining networking and interviewing skills. Whatever your needs, the offices of Career Services and Experiential Learning offer services and resources to aid in the career exploration and job search of Master and Doctoral students in every academic discipline. Students can use a helpful program called Handshake to search for internship opportunities. (See [www.career.ucf.edu](http://www.career.ucf.edu))

## Forms

- [College of Graduate Studies Forms and References](#)  
A complete listing of general forms and references for graduate students, with direct links, may be found here.
- [Graduate Petition Form](#)  
When unusual situations arise, petitions for exceptions to policy may be requested by the student. Depending on the type of appeal, the student should contact the program advisor to begin the petition process.
- [Traveling Scholar Form](#)  
If a student would like to take advantage of special resources available on another campus but not available on the home campus; for example, special course offerings, research opportunities, unique laboratories and library collections, this form must be completed and approved.
- Restricted Registration form: This form is used to enroll in Thesis, Directed Research, or Independent Study. If enrolling in Directed Research or Independent Study, the student needs to create a short syllabus to include: course objectives, deliverables (assignments) and due dates; information on grading; and course schedule indicating when assignments are due and when the faculty member and student will meet during the semester. Contact the NSCM Graduate Admissions Specialist for this form ([nicholsongrad@ucf.edu](mailto:nicholsongrad@ucf.edu)).

## Useful Links

- [Department of Games and Interactive Media \(GaIM\)](#)
- [Nicholson School of Communication and Media \(NSCM\)](#)
- [College of Graduate Studies](#)
- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Bookstore](#)
- [Campus Map](#)
- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Financial Assistance](#)
- [Golden Rule Student Handbook](#)
- [Graduate Catalog](#)
- [Graduate Student Association](#)
- [Graduate Student Center](#)
- [Housing and Residence Life](#)
- [Housing, off campus](#)
- [Knights Email](#)
- [Library](#)
- [NID Help](#)
- [Pathways to Success](#)
- [Recreation and Wellness Center](#)
- [Shuttles Parking Services](#)
- [Student Health Services](#)
- [Thesis and Dissertation \(ETD\)](#)
- [UCF Global](#)
- [University Writing Center](#)
- Twitter feed for GaIM Research Group: @UCFGaIMRG (Contact mel.stanfill@ucf.edu to join group)
- [Participatory Research and Design Network](#)

# Discipline and Dismissal Process

## Professional Conduct Expectations

As a community of scholars and creators, the Digital Media M.A. program recognizes that the freedom of inquiry essential to scholarly and creative work carries with it the responsibilities of professional conduct. Students are expected to adhere to the rules and regulations as stipulated by the University of Central Florida and the Digital Media M.A. handbook.

First, our teaching, creative production, and inquiry must be respectful. Members of our scholarly and creative community actively demonstrate respect for others. We also do not exploit or discriminate against others on grounds including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious creed, age, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, or disability; we do not sexually harass students, colleagues, or staff members; and we do not use language that is prejudicial or gratuitously derogatory. All members of the community are expected to behave in a respectful and courteous manner to others, avoiding threatening or bullying behaviors such as stalking, dishonesty, disrespect for others' personal space, or misuse of shared spaces. We demonstrate respect for knowledge by avoiding capricious or arbitrary decisions regarding professional status or academic freedom, the misuse of confidential or private information, and the practice of deceit or fraud of the academic community or the public. We will value this respect in our own conduct and will actively admonish failures of respect in the action of others.

Second, professional conduct requires the responsible use of evidence in developing original arguments and both fairness and generosity in hearing and reading the arguments of others. We accept the obligation to exercise critical self-discipline and intellectual honesty in the production and dissemination of knowledge.

Third, our community rests upon the fundamental assumptions of ethical authorship within the responsible conduct of research. Graduate students must not plagiarize the work of others. In addition, submitting the same work to fulfill more than one requirement will be considered self-plagiarism unless there is a substantial revision or addition to the first work and the resubmission takes place with full knowledge and approval of the faculty member to whom the work is being submitted.

Fourth, our community upholds these research standards in all areas including in our interactions with human and nonhuman participants in research, in our engagements with cultural knowledges, in identifying and managing conflicts of interest, in managing data, in using UCF resources, in mentoring and training, and in collaboration.

Enacting these responsibilities upholds the research and academic integrity of our community and the personal integrity of its members. In the assessment of professionalism, instructors and program administrators will consider each student's conduct; the quality of interactions; and meaningful engagement in all aspects of the program.

Students who are in violation of these behaviors will be counseled according to the procedures below and reminded of UCF/DM M.A. expectations. If, after such counseling, the faculty or program administrators conclude that the student is not able or willing to demonstrate an acceptable standard of professionalism, or if there is repeated disregard or violation of standards of professionalism, such behavior will lead to dismissal from the program.

## Academic Progress Expectations

Each student's academic progress is reviewed by both the DM M.A. program and the College of Graduate Studies each semester. Students who have not met conditions or restrictions of their admission may be prohibited from further study in the program. Additionally, students who have not performed to academic standards of the program or university will be placed on Probationary Status or Dismissed from the program.

In accordance with the College of Graduate Studies' Policies and with the minimum university standards for satisfactory performance to continue graduate study, the DM M.A. program maintains the following requirements for all students:

- Students must maintain a GPA\* of at least 3.0 or higher in order to maintain regular graduate student status, receive financial assistance, and qualify for graduation.
- A course in which a student has received an unsatisfactory grade may be repeated; however both grades will be used in computing the GPA.

\*all references to GPA refer to Graduate Status Grade Point Average. A graduate status GPA will be calculated based on the graduate courses taken at UCF since admission into each degree or certificate program. See UCF Graduate Catalog for more information or contact the NSCM Graduate Admissions Specialist for assistance: <http://catalog.ucf.edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=201#grade-system>

## Probation and Dismissal Policy and Process

Probationary Status in the DM M.A. means that the student is at risk (academic, professional, or ethical) within the program. A student cannot graduate from the DM M.A. program while on probationary status.

A student may be placed on Probation if any of the following occur:

- Academic Probation: Per College of Graduate Studies' policy, if the graduate status GPA falls below the required 3.00, the student will have 9 credit hours to bring the GPA above a 3.00 in order to have the Academic Probation removed. Students will receive notice in writing from the College of Graduate Studies.
- Conduct Probation: Any minor violation of the aforementioned professional conduct expectations, may result in conduct probation. The GaIM Assistant Director will determine the severity of violation by reviewing the documentation provided, and will notify the student based on the procedures outlined in the following section. A severe conduct violation, which may lead to dismissal from the DM M.A. program will always require the review of an ad-hoc disciplinary committee as described below.

### Conduct Violation Process:

If a violation of a conduct policy occurs, it will be reported to the DM M.A. program coordinator in writing. This should include specifically which aspects of the professional conduct policy the student has allegedly violated, when these violations allegedly took place, and any available evidence to support the allegation, to allow the Coordinator to understand the situation and counsel the student appropriately.

- The DM M.A. program committee will evaluate the matter and determine an appropriate course of action ranging from a written warning to convening an ad-hoc disciplinary committee of the T&T faculty for evaluation based on the egregiousness of the violation. The committee will be comprised of faculty members who do not have a relationship with the student as advisor, exam/dissertation committee member, or RA/TA supervisor and who are not involved in the complaint. The GaIM Assistant Director will serve as an ex officio member of the committee unless barred by the relationships listed above.
- If a disciplinary committee is convened, members will discuss the student's professional conduct. The committee will consult the complaining party, the student, and the student's advisor, and recommend appropriate action based on the severity of violation up to and including program dismissal.

# Removal of funding for Graduate Assistants (GTA, GRA) Policy and Process

Assistantships are normally offered for a period of two years on admission to the program, or for GRAs for a set period related to a specific project's funding. However continued funding is contingent on satisfactory performance in the assistantship and satisfactory progress towards the degree.

## Expectations

Assistants must work their scheduled number of hours (standard: 20).

Assistants are expected to communicate with their supervisor consistently, as discussed at the beginning of the assistantship. It is the responsibility of the assistant to be proactive in starting the conversation with their supervisor. If an assistant is having trouble communicating with their supervisor, they should contact the GaIM Assistant Director for help.

Teaching Associates must hold class as scheduled, grade student work in a timely fashion, respond to student emails, hold regular office hours in accordance with the policy of the Assistantship department, and submit final grades by the deadline each semester. Further, they must be mindful of the power relationship between themselves and the students in their classes and maintain a professional relationship with students, without social interactions, for the duration of the course.

Research Assistants must perform the tasks specified in their assignment description in a timely fashion. They must be mindful of research ethics and work to minimize any potential harm to human or nonhuman participants or communities in such research. Moreover, they should be fully cognizant of the purpose or purposes for which their work is intended, and recognize that research-based decisions and actions may have long-term consequences for communities and individuals being studied.

## Procedure

A faculty member supervising an Assistant who is not meeting the expectations of their assistantship will first inform the student in writing, reminding them of the expectations and clearly indicating which expectations are not being met and when the failures to meet expectations have taken place.

If, after the faculty member has communicated with the student, the expectations continue not to be met, they will notify the GaIM Assistant Director in writing. This should include specifically which expectations are not being met, when the failures to meet expectations have taken place, and any other pertinent information to allow the Director to understand the situation and counsel the student appropriately.

The student will be provided with a Letter of Counseling/Instruction from the GaIM Assistant Director about the expectations of their assistantship, in addition to having a face to face meeting with the GaIM Assistant Director to discuss the expectations.

Any further failure to meet the expectations of the assistantship after an Assistant has been counseled should be documented as above and provided to the GaIM Assistant Director in writing.

Students who establish a pattern of failure to meet the expectations of their assistantship will not be offered a continuing assistantship in subsequent academic years.

# Grad Faculty

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