

Plan of Study Best Practices Document

A. POS Organization:

1. Define your research focus

Define your research/scholarly areas of focus in Communication Studies. Provide your own working definition of your sub-field (ICR, MHC, RCE) and then identify and describe at least 2 areas of study or concentration. Areas of concentration are scholarly subject areas in which you receive training and gain knowledge and experience such that you can do research and/or teach in those areas. Areas of concentration may be defined by a conceptual problem, thematic area, theoretical approach, or method. Also, consider graduate certificates or professional activities that may contribute to your training in each area. Cite relevant scholarly sources; about 1250 words.

2. Describe formative scholarly research activities to date

Describe 2 significant research experiences or scholarly investigations that have shaped your research interests (these can be class projects, independent research, group research projects, or sponsored research undertaken at any institution). Briefly discuss the research questions that emerged and situate your investigation within relevant scholarly debates. What kinds of scholarly training do you need to continue to pursue these or related questions? How do these research interests feed into your areas of concentration? Cite relevant scholarly sources; about 1250 words.

3. Identify research outlets and funding support

Provide a narrative discussion of how and why 2-3 conferences and 2-3 journals are significant research outlets for work in your areas. Also provide a review of 2 internal and 1 external funding opportunities that would support your research at Iowa. About 500 words. It is suggested but not required that Ph.D. students include as an appendix a brief and tentative 3-year plan (covering years 2-4 of Ph.D. study at Iowa) that includes proposed timelines for completing academic benchmarks (such as the comprehensive exam), applying for grant and fellowship funding, professional training, and preparing submissions for conferences and journals.

4. Career Goals and professional development

What is your ideal career and what does it entail? Describe your career goals in relation to at least 1 specific academic or other job posting/description. What are the professional specializations that would help prepare you for this position? Are there specific types of professional training that would help you, such as learning technologies, grant writing, DEI training, digital scholarship, media production, or training in community engagement? Provide a narrative discussion of relevant resources on campus or off campus that will help you achieve your career goals. About 500 words.

5. Course plan

List all courses to be counted towards the Ph.D. organized by area of concentration (courses that don't fit into the areas of concentration can be listed separately as "additional courses"). List courses completed outside of the University of Iowa, at Iowa, and courses yet-to-be-taken at Iowa. Ph.D. students need at least 66 hours of coursework and 6 dissertation hours for a total of 72 credit hours.

No more than 30 hours of coursework may be transferred in from another graduate program, and each course must be approved by the POS committee. The distribution of courses across areas of concentration varies, but aim for about 20 hours of coursework per area. For courses taken outside of the University of Iowa that you desire to count towards the Ph.D., attached an appendix with brief descriptions of each course.

B. General Expectations:

1. The Plan of Study should be about 3500 words or 12-15 double-spaced pages, plus an appendix (see #5) and references.
2. All documents submitted should include 1" margins, be in 12-point Times New Roman font and follow an approved manual of style:
 - a) ICR: APA
 - b) MHC: APA, MLA or Chicago
 - c) RHE: the Chicago Manual of Style 17th Edition (CMOS17). Use endnotes *and* a bibliography.