Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What are the pros and cons of doing a research paper, creative project or thesis? What are the requirements of each?

   Answer: The revised Graduate Research Procedures document details manuscript and procedural requirements. To decide which type of project to do depends on what type of methodology students would like to use (e.g., content analysis, quantitative survey or qualitative research) and their future career plans. A research paper or thesis requires the use of theoretical research to provide in-depth analysis of an area of study. A creative project, also requires the use of theory, a literature review, and a methodology, but the emphasis is on applied research with the production of an original product, such as an extended work of literary journalism, a public relations crisis or strategic plan, or a multi-media presentation. If a student plans to pursue a Ph.D., then it is strongly suggested he/she complete a thesis. If a student plans to work directly in communications after graduation, then a creative project makes sense. A research paper is only an option for students who began their graduate studies at Ball State before fall 2011.

2. How does a graduate student select an adviser or committee chair? How is a committee selected?

   Answer: The journalism department Graduate Faculty Profile document lists teaching and research credentials of faculty. Graduate students should review the profiles and seek opportunities for effective matching of research interests and methodologies. Students should also think about their personality, organizational skills and what type of mentoring they want from an adviser, chair and a committee (e.g., hands-on management). Similar research interests and complementary personalities will help create a better research experience and quality finished product.

3. Which faculty members can be advisers or serve on a committee? Do committee members and advisers have to be from the journalism department?

   Answer: The university recently reclassified its graduate faculty structure with three categories of membership: full, associate and assistant graduate faculty. Only full (regular) graduate faculty can serve as advisers or chairs of theses and six-hour creative projects. Associate graduate faculty are limited to serving as committee members. The Department of Journalism and Graduate School’s requirement is that at least two members of a committee should be from the department, but students may seek Graduate School approval to have two members of the committee from outside the department. Check with the Department of Journalism and the Graduate
School or the department’s Graduate Studies Director Mark Masse’ (mhmasse@bsu.edu) regarding graduate faculty classifications.

4. What is required to begin working on a research paper, creative project or thesis?

Answer: The first step after selecting an adviser or committee is for both students and faculty to sign a graduate paper agreement. Also, students must make sure to follow any IRB procedures and requirements (e.g., CITI certification). Review the graduate research procedures and discuss the requirements with your committee chair or adviser. Also, review the graduate student proposal guide to ensure all department and Graduate School requirements are met. Advisers and committee members must be given 10 days to review any material submitted to them, and the final research paper, creative project or thesis must be submitted to the Graduate School a month prior to scheduled graduation dates.

5. How do graduate students complete internships and get credit for their work?

Answer: Graduate students may complete an internship. The department suggests that the internship be done in the subject area in which the student is currently studying. If you are interested in doing an internship for credit, contact Internship Coordinator Sheryl Swingley.

6. What are the deadlines for registering for spring and fall classes?

Answer: The deadlines for registering for classes are on the Graduate School's website.

7. How and when are faculty selected to teach specific graduate courses?

Answer: Although there are regular teaching assignments for faculty, there is not a pre-arranged schedule set for which professor will teach specific courses.

8. How can on-campus and online students get more involved in on-campus activities?

Answer: All graduate students are encouraged to get involved in campus activities. E-mail Graduate Studies Director Mark Masse’ if you are interested. Also, all graduate students should be involved in the Graduate Community (GC), the Department of Journalism’s graduate student organization. E-mail GC Faculty Coordinator Adam Kuban (ajkuban@bsu.edu) for more information.
9. What opportunities exist for immersive learning and student media?

Answer: While graduate studies coursework doesn’t require immersive learning, the department encourages professional skills’ experiences for graduate students to pursue as their elective courses. The department also encourages graduate students to work with student media such as: Ball Points, the Daily News and Cardinal Communications.

10. Are there academic awards and scholarships for graduate students?

Answer: Graduate students at Ball State are not awarded academic designations (e.g., cum laude or summa cum laude), but the Graduate School does sponsor outstanding thesis and creative project awards. The Department of Journalism also has scholarships and a limited number of assistantships available for graduate students.

For more information, visit the Department of Journalism’s website: www.bsu.edu/journalism Go to “Current Students” and then look for the listing of resources for graduate students. And for audio commentary on the above questions, visit the Graduate Orientation site: http://bsugraduatejournalism.wordpress.com/

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