Student Handbook and Capstone Project Guidelines
2017
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MACT Student Poster Session
Communications and Technology Research Symposium
Atrium, Enterprise Square, University of Alberta
**SPRING INSTITUTE**

At your **first spring institute**, you will meet your professors, your cohort, students from the previous cohort, and the MACT staff. You will also be introduced to the online course management system and will be given various University of Alberta orientations. You will begin work on the first two core courses of the program, COMM 502 – Human Communications and COMM 503 – Social Impact of Digital Media. You will complete the in-class requirements for these courses during the three weeks of the institute. Several social occasions such as the welcoming reception and the farewell dinner are long standing traditions at the Institute and provide much needed breaks from the intense academic schedule.

At your **second Spring Institute**, you can expect much the same time pressures as the first. You will complete COMM 501—Applied Research Methods and COMM 506—Strategic Communications in a Digital World. An added component of your second spring institute is your participation in the poster session at the annual Communications and Technology Research Symposium. This event is open to the university community. All second year MACT students participate in the poster session. First year students attend, but are not required to prepare a poster presentation until their second Spring Institute.

**RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM**

**UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA SYMPOSIUM ON COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY**

Final Friday of the Spring Institute (1:00 – 4:30 pm)

This annual symposium serves as a forum for professionals and academics from various disciplines (e.g., communications, education, business, psychology) to showcase and discuss issues related to communication and technology.

Our second year MACT students present their research proposals in poster format at the symposium. A distinguished lecturer is invited each year who presents a perspective on this diverse field. The symposium is an excellent opportunity to network with individuals working and studying in communications, and will enrich your graduate learning experience.
THE COHORT MODEL

The MACT program uses the cohort model of student progress. A cohort historically referred to a band of soldiers in ancient Rome. We use the term simply to refer to a group that has been established for the purpose of seeking a common goal or following the same path. The goal or path is your program of graduate studies at the University of Alberta. You are a member of the cohort that came together at your first Spring Institute. Only one cohort is admitted each year, so you may hear occasional references to “Cohort 2016,” “Cohort 2017,” and so on.

What the cohort model means for you is that much of your graduate student experience will be shared with other students. Many friendships and professional relationships are established in each cohort. These connections can be an unanticipated benefit of the cohort model. The reason we are committed to this model, though, is that it allows you to meet and work with a relatively small group of people in the online and classroom courses to follow. Mutual support is possible within your cohort, and you’re encouraged to take full advantage of that possibility.
For example, we expect that the transition to the first online course can be smoother because you have already met your colleagues face-to-face. Similarly, we hope that you’ll look forward to your second Spring Institute in part because of the opportunity to renew connections with members of your cohort, many of whom you will have had only online contact during the intervening months. Fellow members of your cohort can support you in your goal of completing the program. In turn, they may benefit by your encouragement and advice throughout the two years you are with us.

The decision to leave the cohort for any reason, even if only for a course or two, is therefore one you should consider carefully. If at all possible – and we know that students’ lives are active and sometimes even hectic or disrupted – you should try to remain with your cohort for the full progression of the core courses. Each core course is offered only once per year. Skipping a core course, even if you intend to take it later, can create problems that you might not expect. Perhaps more importantly, it can cause you to miss some of the benefits of the cohort model.

For example, if you missed the first online course in your program for some reason, which is offered in the fall of your first year, you would have to take the course the following year. This would disturb the intended sequence of the curriculum, which builds progressively on concepts covered in earlier courses. You would also be taking the course with members of a different cohort. As a result, you would have to try to get to know people using only electronic postings, and without the benefit of face-to-face interaction. A further consequence of leaving the cohort temporarily in this case is that you would miss the challenges, benefits, and mutual support that occurred in your cohort as people deal for the first time with studying in an online course in the program.

You are required to discuss your intent to miss a core course with your academic advisor or the MACT director. Provide your proposed plan of study, which should describe your timeline for completion of core courses, electives and the final research project at this meeting. Your plan indicates that you understand what is required to keep you on track to successful completion of the program.
ONLINE LEARNING

The term “online learning” refers to a type of distance education that is delivered using the Internet and specific course management software, in this case, Moodle, also known at the University of Alberta as “eClass”. Students use the Internet to access a website where all course information is located. There is also a place for conferencing, where students enter into dialogue with their classmates and instructors.

The type of online learning that the MACT program utilizes most fully is called asynchronous. Students learning asynchronously can access the course and do the work required for it whenever it is convenient for them – for example, in the early morning, during their lunch hour, or in the evening. The entire course is archived and all messages remain available for reading and response. Synchronous technology, on the other hand, requires all learners to be online at a certain time. Chat sessions may be set up in different courses at specified times, but these are optional, and are not graded in any way.

Online courses in the MACT program have start and end dates in the same way as other University of Alberta courses which run on the semester system (i.e. from early September to early December). Within this time frame, due dates are set for completing sections and submitting assignments. The entire group of students (your cohort) proceeds through the course on the same schedule, meeting the same deadlines.

The flexibility of distance learning allows you to choose when and where to learn – at home, in the workplace, or even in a hotel room while you travel for work or pleasure.
Are there rules to follow when making postings?

To make this learning activity as meaningful as possible, these are guidelines you should follow:

1. Follow your instructor’s guidelines for your postings. Make your postings as brief as possible. Ensure that you post your work to the assigned conference forum.

2. Use appropriate language – treat this activity the same way as you would in a face to face class discussion by showing respect for others.

3. Follow the schedule for posting. It is designed to give all members of the conference time to read and think about the postings, and make thoughtful responses. Post your responses in the assigned conference forum.

4. Take time to make a useful contribution to the conference. Check your grammar and spelling.

5. Treat others as you would like to be treated – use only constructive criticism and give praise where it is due. Remember that if you have urgent questions or concerns about the course or the program’s administration, you should contact the instructor or program office rather than using the eClass Discussions Tool.

6. Contribute your expertise by answering the questions of others. Share your relevant experiences about the topic with other students. Suggest other sources of information, if you have them.

7. Be forgiving of yourself as well as others. Since this type of learning is new to many people, mistakes will occur.

Students are reminded that all postings related to online discussions for courses cannot be circulated, in any form, outside the context of the course for which they are made.

While the strength of online discussions comes from students sharing general and specific information from their professional experiences, students are advised to structure their comments to reflect a descriptive and academic analysis of the situation, and refrain from including personal comments about individuals or groups involved in the situation.

Students are also reminded to consider the current level of public knowledge about a particular situation when including information in an online posting.

Students should be aware that some of their activities on the course sites (i.e. number of visits, time of visit, number of pages, discussions read etc) can be monitored and tracked by the instructors.
THE MACT TEAM

Our office hours are 8:00 am – 4:00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Susan Petruszczak is MACT’s Program Assistant. She has been with the program since its inception in January 2000. Her knowledge of eClass is extensive and she can usually assist you with any technical anomaly you encounter or direct you to additional sources for assistance. Susan registers you in your courses, orders text and course packs, and generally offers you insight into the many policies and procedures of the University of Alberta. Susan has served in the Faculty of Extension as Secretary to the Dean, as assistant editor of CJUCE (Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education), and is herself an avid writer.

Eileen Crookes joined the MACT program in 2004 as Program Coordinator. She is your resource for program and course issues as well as University and Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research policies. Eileen is the financial and administrative manager of the program as well as having responsibility for marketing and recruitment. In addition, Eileen is the Team Lead for the Communications and Design continuing professional education unit with Extension.

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ACADEMIC ADVISORS

When you accepted your position in the MACT program, you were assigned an academic advisor to assist you throughout your program. Any questions you may have of an academic nature should be addressed to your advisor.

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To read the full CVs of these professors or to review their research work, please go to the **MACT website**
REGISTRATION

Core courses
Before each term, the MACT office will email you about the upcoming core course. You will be able to register yourself into MACT core and elective via Bear Tracks. Your timetable and fee assessment is available on Bear Tracks too. The university does not mail out hardcopies of these documents and students are responsible for accessing this information themselves on Bear Tracks. For information on fees, please visit the Office of the Registrar’s website at www.registrar.ualberta.ca. Tuition and fee amounts are made available as soon as they are determined. Check the Academic Schedule in the University of Alberta calendar for payment deadlines. You can pay them online at www.financial.ualberta.ca. You can NOT pay tuition or fees at the Faculty of Extension.

Students are responsible for paying fees/fines by stated deadlines. Failure to do so can result in access to grades, registration and convocation being withheld by the Office of the Registrar.

Electives
We offer online electives during the summer, fall and winter terms each year. An information session is scheduled during the spring institute with details about summer courses as well as electives to be offered in the fall and winter terms. You will have exclusive access to register for MACT elective courses up to approximately 6 weeks before the start of a course. Online registration will open to all University of Alberta graduate students at that time.

Capstone Research Project
When you and your supervisor have determined that you are ready to register in the capping research project course, contact the MACT office to request registration. You will not be registered automatically into this course or have access to register yourself.

CAMPUS COMPUTING ID and BEAR TRACKS
Your campus computing logon (called a CCID) and password are extremely important to your life as a University of Alberta graduate student. When you receive those data (emailed to you after you submit your online application for admission), please make note of them. You will need this information for signing on to your online courses, to access library, Bear Tracks and administrative resources. The MACT office does not know your password and we cannot help you if you lose them. If you do lose/forget your password, you will have to contact IST https://ist.ualberta.ca/ to have you password reset.
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

The University has an Electronic Communications Policy for students and applicants. When appropriate, the University will send you important information through e-mail. As a result, you will receive this information in a timely way and can follow up promptly.

Key Points Regarding Electronic Communications

- All students and applicants are assigned a University of Alberta Campus Computing ID (CCID) with e-mail privileges. The ‘CCID@ualberta.ca’ e-mail address originally assigned by the University is the e-mail address to which communications will be sent.
- Check your U of A e-mail account at least once a week.
- See the Academic Information and Communication Technologies (AICT) for detailed information on CCIDs, conditions of use and related privileges.
- You must advise IST immediately of any problems encountered with University e-mail accounts by contacting the Help Desk (www.ualberta.ca/HELP) or calling 780.492.9400.
- Failure to receive or read University communications sent to the University e-mail address in a timely manner does not absolve students and applicants from knowing, responding to or complying with the content of that communication.

Check your U of A email account regularly. Emails addressed to you individually by the University will not appear in your eClass course sites.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENT

The University of Alberta has a Professional Development (PD) Requirement for all graduate students admitted in fall term 2016 and beyond. You will develop an individualized career plan (Individual Development Plan or IDP) and complete eight hours of professional development activities, inspired by your career plan.

Requirements and Timeline:

- Individual Development Plan (IDP) completed in first 12 months of study
- Eight hours of approved professional development activities completed prior to the completion of the capstone research project (COMM 900)

A mandatory orientation workshop and IDP session is scheduled during Spring Institute to assist you to begin this required activity. The IDP session counts as 1.5 hours toward the required 8 hours of PD activity.
CAPSTONE PROJECT SUPERVISORS

The professors in the Faculty of Extension offer a wide range of content expertise upon which to draw for your final project. Choosing the most appropriate supervisor for you and your topic is very important. You should have a project supervisor in place by the summer following your second spring institute. Approval of the supervisory relationship must be obtained from the MACT office.

We will provide opportunities for you at the Spring Institute to meet potential supervisors. While searching for supervisors, you are encouraged to interview faculty personally to establish an overlap of interests, a compatible work ethic, and a personal affinity.

It is very important that you and your supervisor establish and maintain a good working relationship. When you embark upon your research, you will, in consultation with your supervisor, negotiate agreements concerning the research to be undertaken, the frequency of supervisory meetings, and a timetable outlining your research program. The timetable must include registering in the capping project course (COMM 900). You must complete the capping project course in order to complete the requirements on the MACT program and be eligible to graduate. Fees are assessed with each registration into the course.

When you and your supervisor have determined that you are ready, contact the MACT office to request registration.
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA POLICIES

The following policies are a guide for your use, should you ever encounter a situation that may require their application. Please ensure that you check with MACT staff for clarification if required. Also, please note that the policies included are part of a larger body of University of Alberta policies and are offered here for your easy reference. A full listing of policies can be found in the University of Alberta calendar [http://www.registrar.ualberta.ca/calendar/](http://www.registrar.ualberta.ca/calendar/). The MACT program, like all other graduate programs at the University of Alberta, is subject to the policies and regulations of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research and the MACT program does not have the power to waive University of Alberta policies and regulations. You are always welcome to inquire with us about anything associated with your relationship with the University, but keep in mind that there are times that you must accept the decisions that have been made in relation to your program of studies, subject to the formal appeals processes that are in place.

You are strongly encouraged to review the FGSR section of the University of Alberta calendar to familiarize yourself with the policies, deadlines and procedures that apply to all graduate students.

ACADEMIC STANDING

The pass mark in any course taken while registered in the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research is a grade of C+ or 2.3 on the 4 point scale.

All students in degree programs must maintain a minimum cumulative program grade point average of 2.7 out of 4 throughout the course of the program. A student who does not maintain this GPA will be asked to withdraw.

DROPPING A COURSE

The University of Alberta has strict deadlines for students who wish to drop or withdrawing from a course. There are penalties for not meeting these deadlines.

How to drop a course

If you want to drop a MACT elective you can use the Bear Tracks online registration system to drop the course. If the course is offered by department permission only, you will need to fill out a Course Delete form, and have it signed by us and the department offering the course. The department offering the course will then drop you from the course.

If you need to drop a MACT core course, contact the MACT office. You are advised to discuss this change f your study plan with us and provide a written plan.
Dropping a course without penalty
Check the current University Calendar for exact dates. Each term as a deadline by which you can drop courses and receive a fees refund. Should you need to drop a course during this time, it will not appear on your student record.

Withdrawing from a course with penalty
If you withdraw from a course after the Add/Drop deadline, you will face a financial penalty. There are normally two official withdrawal dates per term. The first will result in a financial penalty of 50% of your course fees and a W on your official transcript, and the second will result in a 100% financial penalty of your course fees and a W on your transcript. Check the current University Calendar for term withdrawal dates.

Withdrawing from a course requires the use of a Withdrawal form, available from the MACT office or at the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research.

COURSE FAIL
Should you not complete your coursework, you will receive a grade of either IN5 (incomplete fail – grade of 0.0 assigned) or NC (failure – no grade point value assigned). You will also fail your course if your mark is under the minimum course pass mark of 2.3 on the 4 point scale. If your grade point average (GPA) is under the minimum academic standing of 2.7 on the 4 point scale, you may not be allowed to continue in the program. If this happens, the MACT office will receive correspondence from the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research concerning your student status. MACT may recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research that you withdraw from the program and the University or be allowed to continue in the program for a specified probationary period.

RE-TAKING A COURSE
Should you not obtain an acceptable grade, or fail to complete a course that is required of your graduate program, you must obtain the approval of your department (MACT) and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research to retake the course. You must also obtain a passing grade on the repeated course.

In calculating your GPA, both the original failing grade and the grade received when the course is retaken will be used. The failing grade AND the grade achieved on the repeated course will appear on your transcript. A grade of IN5 (incomplete fail) is counted as a numeric grade of 0.0 in the calculation of GPA.
COURSE INCOMPLETE

If you do not complete your coursework by the end of term, you are expected to contact your instructor to negotiate a suitable extension deadline by which you will complete your coursework. A grade of IN and the extension deadline will be entered into your student record. If the work is not completed by this deadline, the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research will assign a grade of IN5 (incomplete fail). A grade of IN5 is equivalent to a grade of zero and does become part of the cumulative grade point average. This can have an impact on eligibility for convocation.

If the work can not be completed by the deadline, contact your instructor and the MACT office in advance of the deadline date to discuss a further extension. All grade extensions must be approved by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research and must be requested before the deadline.

POSTPONING A CORE COURSE

As discussed earlier under “The Cohort Model”, deciding not to take a core course in the order in which the curriculum rolls out requires some thought and planning. Before doing so, you must discuss this change of plan with the Director. Your request should be made in writing to the Director, who will consult with you on a new schedule. A copy of the new study schedule will be kept in your student file.

A change to your study plan may extend the duration and cost of your program (i.e. continuing program fee).

MAINTAINING REGISTRATION

Students, in the MACT course-based stream, must register in and complete a minimum of *3 of coursework (one 3 credit course) or in M REG 800 Maintaining Registration between September to August each year to keep their program active. If registration lapses, the university requires that students re-apply for admission. The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research imposes a fee of approximately $1200 (subject to change) for re-admission as well as the $100 application fee. There is no guarantee of re-admission.
TRANSFER CREDIT

Transfer Credit refers to the formal transfer of credit for a course(s) which has been earned outside the program and may be granted by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, provided the course(s) has not been counted toward a previous degree or program and was not used to satisfy admission requirements of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research.

In the MACT program, graduate level courses taken outside the program may be considered for transfer of credit as electives. Prior to registering in a course outside the program, consult with the Director regarding the appropriateness of the course as an elective. Once you have received the approval of the Director, you can work directly with the department or institution offering the course to register. After you have completed the course, the MACT office will require notice from you that the course is complete. The request for transfer credit must be initiated by you. If the course was taken through another institution (i.e. University of Calgary), have an official transcript sent to the MACT office. We will then complete the appropriate paperwork to recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research that you receive transfer credit for the course as an elective in the MACT program.

Graduate level courses taken prior to admission to the MACT program (5 years or less) may be considered for credit, however, this is done on a case by case basis. Consult the MACT office for more information.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research makes the final decision on all requests for transfer credit and if some cases may refuse the request.

APPEALS

Procedures for Graduate Student Grievances and Appeals of Academic Decisions

The route for grievances relating to grade appeals and/or reappraisals is as follows:

1. The Instructor of the course
2. The Graduate Program Coordinator
3. The Associate Dean, Academic & Student Affairs (ADASA)

Reappraisals and/or Grade Appeals

If a student disagrees with a MARK ON AN ASSIGNMENT OR AN EXAM (NOT FINAL PROJECT OR FINAL EXAM GRADE), the student must consult with the instructor within ten (10) business days from the date the marked assignment/examination was returned. The instructor will provide the student an explanation of the mark. After reviewing the basis of the mark with the student, the instructor may affirm, raise or lower the mark. The instructor’s decision is final.
REAPPRAISALS

If a student disagrees with a **FINAL EXAMINATION/PROJECT GRADE**, the student must consult with the instructor within ten (10) business days of the date the final grade is posted. The student may, at this time, make a request for a reappraisal to the Graduate Program Coordinator or designate of the program. The student must be advised that there is a fee for the reappraisal. See **Appendix A** for details. No further action will be taken until the reappraisal is completed.

If there are sufficient grounds for an appeal, the Graduate Program Coordinator or designate will advise the student that;

- A final grade appeal **must be initiated by the student and made in writing** within ten (10) business days after the decision has been received. The application must include: ground(s) for the complaint, a photocopy of the marked work, a copy of syllabus, and a clean copy of the work. The application can be sent electronically or by mail to the Graduate Program Coordinator or designate.
- If there are insufficient grounds for appeal, the Graduate Program Coordinator or designate will inform the student by electronic communication to his or her University of Alberta account, within ten (10) business days.

*Additional Note: If the grade in question is a final grade based in whole or in part on a final exam, the student may submit a reappraisal application, otherwise the only portion of the student’s course to be reappraised is the final exam.*

If the student chooses **NOT** to have a reappraisal, the Graduate Program Coordinator or designate will:

- advise the student that the current grade will be the final and the file will be closed, or
- advise the student that if they are not satisfied with the outcome, they may launch a **GRADE APPEAL** as outlined below.

GRADE APPEALS

Most problems are resolved by the Graduate Program Coordinator or designate responsible for the course. If the student’s concerns have not been resolved, the student may launch a Grade Appeal to the Graduate Program Coordinator or designate.

The Graduate Program Coordinator in consultation with the Associate Dean, Academic & Student Affairs (ADASA) shall determine if there are sufficient grounds for an appeal.

*Important Note:* In the case of a graduate student’s course work, the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research will be advised of any grade changes
by the Associate Dean Academic & Student Affairs or designate. Please note that ‘grade appeals initiated by graduate students do not fall within the jurisdiction of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, but rather within the jurisdiction of the Faculty from which the graduate student had taken the course in question’ (U of A Calendar, Section 203.14).

The grounds for an appeal of a **FINAL EXAMINATION/PROJECT GRADE, OR A FINAL GRADE** includes one or more of the following:

- errors in calculating mark or grade,
- procedural errors,
- failure to consider all relevant factors
- bias or discrimination, and
- lack of adherence to the content as stated in the course syllabus

A request for an appeal must be submitted in writing to the Office of the Dean and include:

- A description of the nature of the appeal, including any available supporting documentation
- The relief being sought, and
- The steps the student has taken to resolve the issue

The request must be signed by the student and delivered to the ADASA or delegate in the Office of the Dean within thirty (30) business days of receipt of a decision pursuant to the informal procedures.

On receipt of the request for an appeal, the ADASA or designate with assistance from the Graduate Program Coordinator or designate shall, within ten (10) business days, constitute an Academic Appeals Committee (See Appendix B for details) and forward the student’s submission to the Chair of the Academic Appeals Committee and to the respective instructor.

**Within ten (10) business days** of receiving materials from the ADASA, Graduate Program Coordinator or designate or the instructor, the Chair of the Academic Appeals Committee shall convene a meeting of the Committee.

The Chair of the Academic Appeals Committee will communicate in writing to the Associate Dean, Academic & Student Affairs or designate and the student, the decision of the Academic Appeals Committee on the matter. **The decision of the Academic Appeals Committee shall be final and binding.**
The Faculty will not act when there are insufficient grounds for an appeal or reappraisal. The following do not constitute grounds for an appeal or reappraisal:

- disagreement with or disliking the instructor’s marking scheme,
- disagreement with or coming close to the cut-off point for a higher grade, and
- disagreement with the instructor’s judgment of the quality of submitted work.

Only the following may constitute grounds for an appeal or reappraisal:

- errors in calculating mark or grade,
- procedural errors,
- failure to consider all relevant factors
- bias or discrimination, and
- lack of adherence to the content as stated in the course syllabus

Students have the right to use the services of the Student OmbudService in resolving grievances and preparing their appeals (http://www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca/AboutUs.aspx).

**WITHDRAWING FROM THE PROGRAM**

You are able to withdraw from MACT and the University at any time. The MACT program will usually be able to help you by providing alternative study options, allowing you to “stop-out” for a while, etc. Please consult with MACT staff and the Director before you decide to withdraw from the program and the University of Alberta.

If you choose to withdraw completely from MACT and the University, you must let the MACT office know in writing. At that point, we will send you the official University of Alberta Withdrawal form, which you must fill out, sign, and return to us. We will then forward it to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research so that your formal withdrawal from the program and the University can be processed.

If your course or research work is unsatisfactory, the MACT office and the University of Alberta may require you to withdraw.
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Graduate degree requirements include a mandatory component that provides training in the areas of academic integrity and ethics through the completion of a minimum of 8 hours of structured academic activity. This requirement has been incorporated into the curriculum of core courses within the MACT program. The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research offers a Graduate Ethics Training (GET) program via eClass for all graduate students. Students will explore these resources as part of the ethics training they will receive within the MACT program.

Additional resources regarding academic integrity can be found at the Truth in Education website (http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/index.cfm) Students are strongly encouraged to visit this site. It provides vital information about the code of student behaviour which outlines the definition and policies on plagiarism and resources to assist you with proper citation and more.

FEES

Details of current instructional (tuition) and non-instructional (i.e. student services, transcripts etc) fee rates are available on the Office of the Registrar’s website (http://www.registrarsoffice.ualberta.ca/Costs-Tuition-Fees/Cost-Recovery-Programs-and-Courses.aspx). Your fee assessment is available on Bear Tracks. You will not receive a hardcopy of the fee assessment. Unpaid fees will result in denial of access to course registration and convocation.

PROGRAM FEES

The MACT program fee is $3000 (CDN) per year for the first two years and is assessed in the spring term (subject to increase). If you are unable to complete the program requirements within a two-year period, a continuing program fee of $1000 per year (subject to increase) will apply. Your program fee assessment is available on Bear Tracks.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks for the whole program are estimated to cost around $1000 - $1500. Prices fluctuate, so please view this amount as an approximation only.
**CONVOCATION**

There are two Convocation ceremonies at the University of Alberta each year: June and November. You will be eligible to convocate after meeting all requirements of the MACT program.

**Deadlines For Convocation**

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<td>March 25</td>
<td>25 August</td>
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<td>(accepted as passed) by supervisor</td>
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<td>Student submits to MACT office</td>
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**Applying for Convocation**

Graduate students apply for convocation after all requirements of the degree are complete. This is done via Bear Tracks and only you can make this application.

After the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research receives your notice of completion form (submitted by the MACT office), they will change your University record to reflect that you have completed the program. They will also forward your name to the Office of the Registrar so that you can be included on the Convocation list. You will then receive Convocation information by email about your Convocation date, guest tickets, and gown rental and pickup.

If you attend the Convocation ceremony, you will receive your degree parchment when you pick up your Convocation package (guest tickets, gown, etc.). If you do not attend the ceremony, you will receive your parchment in the mail. Please keep your mailing/contact information current in Bear Tracks as this is the address to which your parchment will be mailed. More information is available directly from the [University of Alberta Convocation Office](https://www.ualberta.ca/convocation/)

A [webcast](https://www.ualberta.ca/convocation/) of the convocation ceremonies is live streamed on the University website. An archive of past ceremonies is also available.
FACULTY

Thomas Barker, PhD is a Professor in the Communications and Technology Graduate Program. His PhD is from the University of Texas, and he served as Director of Technical Communication and Rhetoric at Texas Tech University (2003-2012). He published *Writing Software Documentation*, second edition, with Allyn & Bacon Press in 2003 and has contributed articles on writing and professional communication to *Technical Communication, Technical Communication Quarterly*, and *The Journal of Business and Technical Communication*. He is a Fellow in the Society for Technical Communication and a recipient of the J. R. Gould Award for Excellence in Teaching Technical Communication. He has directed doctoral studies in public policy writing, professional issues in technical communication, intercultural communication, document design, and writing program administration. His current work is in risk communication with an emphasis on public health. @TTBarker

Katy Campbell, PhD, is a Professor with the Communications and Technology Graduate Program. Dr. Campbell is also the Dean of the Faculty of Extension. She received her PhD (1994) in Instructional Studies from the University of Alberta. Her doctoral research involved a narrative study of a collaborative instructional design process as a socially transformative practice. During her graduate studies, Dr. Campbell began exploring the nature of the instructional design process as a social and transformative process.

Gordon Gow, PhD is Associate Professor and Director with the Communications and Technology Graduate Program at the University of Alberta. Dr. Gow teaches in the MACT program. His research looks at the development of electronic communications networks from a combined social and technical perspective, with the aim of expanding public understanding of and participation in policymaking. A primary concern of his research is with the long term planning and management of critical infrastructure systems, especially those that support public alerting and emergency management activities. Dr. Gow also teaches a graduate course that examines the impact of new networking technology and services on collaboration. @gagow

Rob McMahon, PhD is an Assistant Professor with the Master of Arts in Communication and Technology (MACT) in the Faculty of Extension. He holds a doctorate in Communication Studies from Simon Fraser University. His PhD dissertation "Digital Self-Determination: Indigenous Peoples and the Network Society in Canada“ was awarded the Dean of Graduate Studies Convocation Medal from the Faculty of Art, Communication and Technology. After he completed his PhD, Rob worked for two years as a postdoctoral researcher with the First Nations Innovation Project at the University of New Brunswick. He also co-founded the First Mile Connectivity Consortium, a national nonprofit association of community-based Indigenous broadband providers. Dr. McMahon teaches COMM 506 Strategic Communications and COMM 509 Seminar in Research Design. @RobMcMn

Stanley Varnhagen, PhD teaching COMM 553 Real World Evaluation in the Communications and Technology Graduate Program. He has a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Dr. Varnhagen’s specialty is in program evaluation and research, especially in the domain of educational technology. He is currently at the University of Alberta, in the Evaluation and Research Services unit of the Faculty of Extension where he is the Academic Director. His major responsibility is leading a team of evaluators in supporting, evaluating, and researching those using innovative learning methods and assisting faculty to evaluate their learning related projects.
CORE COURSE OVERVIEW

In this section, we provide an overview of each of the core courses in the program.

COMM 501: APPLIED RESEARCH IN COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY
Introduction to quantitative and qualitative approaches for conducting research into technology-mediated communications. Guides students in their topic selection and development for their culminating project.

COMM 502: HUMAN COMMUNICATION
Survey of classic theories and emerging perspectives in communication studies. Emphasizes the development of skills for analyzing and understanding communication in context.

COMM 503: SOCIAL IMPACT OF DIGITAL MEDIA
This course explores the social impact of digital communications, with a specific focus on new and emerging social media and networks. Course themes cover a broad range of topics on the history and development of digital communications including social networks, virtual communities, and participatory culture. This course also touches on legal, ethical, and practical dimensions of digital communications as they relate to a range of personal and professional contexts.

COMM 504: ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS
Explores the complexity and dynamism in the reciprocal relationship between communication, technology, and organizational form. Includes the major approaches to organizational design.

COMM 505: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY
This course examines current and emerging issues in communications and technology with an emphasis on providing professional with an advanced understanding of developments in the field informed by historical and critical theoretical perspectives.

COMM 506: STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS IN A DIGITAL WORLD
This course covers the conceptual and practical foundations for effective strategic communications management. It provides professionals with the insights and skills needed to integrate digital media into the strategic communications planning for a range of organizations including non-profit, education, government, health and provide sector.
COMM 509: SEMINAR IN RESEARCH DESIGN
This seminar provides a hands-on approach to understanding the principles and practices of research design as students carry out preparatory work for their capstone project.

COMM 508/COMM 900: DIRECTED RESEARCH PROJECT
(After completion of all core and elective courses)
Under supervision, students undertake a capstone project that addresses a practical problem. Issue or objective related to communications and technology.
(Students admitted prior to May 2011 must register in COMM 508. Students admitted in or after May 2011 must register in COMM 900)

ELECTIONS OF MACT STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Elections will be held during the spring institute for two student positions. You may nominate students from your cohort.

First Year Student - Student rep to the Faculty of Extension Council
This is a voting position. Faculty Council is the academic governance body for the Faculty of Extension. Meetings are held every month or two from September to June. Meetings are normally held in the afternoon, so members must make arrangements to be away from work.

Second Year Student - Student rep to the MACT Advisory Board
The Board meets twice a year for a lunchtime session, to advise the Director on the development of the program. Members include representatives from industry as well as academic staff and the MACT team.
GRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS

FACULTY OF EXTENSION STUDENT AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN GRADUATE STUDIES

Funded and presented by the Faculty of Extension, this award recognizes achievement by a graduate student whose program is based in the Faculty of Extension. The recipient is normally selected based on the final applied research project prepared as part of the graduate program.

Value: A certificate presented by the Faculty of Extension, and a bursary of $500 to be used for professional study in the recipient’s area of professional or academic interest.

Eligibility: Awarded annually to a graduate student based in the Faculty of Extension (e.g., a student in the Master of Arts in Communications and Technology).

Criteria: The award recognizes outstanding accomplishments in graduate study. In reviewing the research report or final project, the following criteria are used in selecting the award recipient:

- high standard of scholarship; evidence of engagement with professional and academic communities; conclusions that are relevant, timely, and clearly stated.

Application: All graduates in the spring and fall Convocations are automatically nominated for consideration, and the award is presented at the Faculty of Extension annual awards ceremony.

Administrative responsibility: Director, MACT Program, convenes three committee members from among instructors, Advisory Board, and alumni, who recommend an award recipient to the Faculty of Extension Awards Committee.
DR MARCO ADRIA AWARD FOR INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENTS
IN COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

Endowed by Dr. Marco Adria, Professor and Director of the Graduate Program in
Communications and Technology at the University of Alberta from its inception in
2000, and by friends, colleagues and family.

Number of Awards: One per year

Value: Up to $2,000

Eligibility: Awarded annually to an international student on a Study Permit who is
registered in a graduate degree program in Communications and Technology in the
Faculty of Extension or who is at the University of Alberta participating in an interna-
tional academic exchange. Recipients will be selected on the basis of academic stand-
ing. A student may only receive the award once. No award will be made if no suitable
candidates are available in any one year

Application: All eligible candidates will automatically be considered by the selection
committee

The award is acknowledged and presented at the Spring Institute
Capstone Project Guidelines
CAPSTONE PROJECT GUIDELINES
COMM 900 Directed Research Project

Revised May 2017

SUMMARY
These guidelines are provided to assist you as you undertake the capstone research project for course based students in the MACT program. An approved capstone project requires you to take responsibility for conducting original research into the application of a chosen aspect of communications technology in a substantial area of personal or professional interest. The capstone project is compulsory for the Master of Arts in Communications and Technology (MACT) degree course based route. COMM 900 has a course weight of 6 credits. By comparison all course cores are 3 credits.

Students admitted to the MACT in May 2011 (Cohort 2011 and beyond) will register in COMM 900. Students in Cohort 2010, or earlier, will register in COMM 508. This transition to a new course name brings the capstone project into line with current FGSR policy. The course weight and course requirements remain the same.

COMM 900 is designed to assess your ability to:

- identify, clarify, and investigate a problem/topic;
- apply theory to practice;
- locate, analyze, and integrate relevant literature;
- gather, analyze, and interpret data;
- consider the application of the findings of the study;
- complete satisfactorily a comprehensive project that represents an original contribution to professional knowledge and practice in the field of communications and technology.
Nature of Project
The capstone research project is designed to conclude study in the MACT. Its practical and professional focus should integrate the core areas of study in the program through an in-depth, independently managed and conducted research project. It must be successfully completed, along with the required coursework, before students are awarded their degree.

Successful completion of the project entails these things:
- a research topic approved by your project supervisor
- the exploration of theory, practice or both, resulting in knowledge or insights about the topic
- the documentation of that research according to the guidelines set forth in this handbook
- the presentation of the draft research proposal to your colleagues (a part of COMM 501)
- the development of your proposal into a full research design plan, grounded in existing literature about the topic (a part of COMM 509)
- the presentation of your research as a completed project to your supervisor

Your project may take the form of one of the following:

- formal analysis of management practice, organizational processes, or policy
- formative or summative evaluation of a program, initiative, or project
- case study, using secondary documents, survey data, or interviews
- replication of a previous study, with either the introduction of a new variable or the analysis of a changed context

You are encouraged to consider each of these categories to determine which will best suit your academic and professional goals. Each category implies a different method of applying theory and of data-gathering.

Your completed capstone project will be published to the MACT community on the University of Alberta Libraries ERA site after convocation. A potential outcome of your project is publication elsewhere. As you plan for and complete your project, you are encouraged to consider opportunities to publish or otherwise disseminate your project findings.
Relationship to COMM 501

COMM 501 (Applied Research in Communications and Technology), will be your first introduction into the concepts and theory associated with graduate research. Through the activities, readings and assignments of COMM 501, you will explore both quantitative and qualitative research issues, examine each part of the research process, and actually begin constructing parts of your draft research proposal. The expertise gained in the study of COMM 501 will help you move forward to COMM 509, and to the completion of the project in COMM 900.

If you have a good idea of what area of research you will be interested in, it’s useful to find related areas of interest in your other courses, both core and elective, that can contribute to your final project. It is customary in graduate work to build a research focus that includes your areas of interest through many of your readings and writings. If this is not possible, because you are uncertain of your final research topic, that is acceptable. However you are encouraged to consult with your academic advisor.

The purpose of COMM 501 is to prepare you for tackling your final project. The assignments you complete in 501 will serve as components of a draft proposal that you will complete with your project supervisor. Your research interests may shift to another topic, necessitating the preparation of another draft proposal for your final project, under the guidance of your project supervisor. Although this route takes more time, it is an acceptable way to proceed.

As you enter into the relationship with your project supervisor, you will bring forward the completed assignments from 501, as a starting point for discussions of your capping research project topic.
Relationship to COMM 509

COMM 509 (Seminar in Research Design) takes off where COMM 501 ends. Working through a series of readings and weekly activities, you will build on the research proposal developed in COMM 501. You will conduct a comprehensive literature review exploring past research on the topic and develop a research design to guide your Capstone work. At the end of COMM 509, you will have completed the literature review guiding your research question and developed a number of research project management resources to help launch your independent research in COMM 900.

COMM 509 directly links to your COMM 900 work by providing a structured means to engage in Capstone research and writing activities. Through COMM 509 you will both expand and narrow your research interests, exploring the breadth of existing work on your topic while pinpointing the specific research question that will guide your Capstone. You will also develop, in collaboration with your cohort, a series of planning tools and other resources, including an email ‘pitch’ and project plan to your potential supervisor. The two major assignments in COMM 509, an Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review, will support and provide material for your Capstone project report.

CAPSTONE PROJECT: FIRST STEPS

Before you enroll in the Capstone Project Course

COMM 900 (for students in Cohort 2011 or beyond)

Although “official” work does not begin on your project until you are registered in COMM 900, in reality you are able to attend to it in various ways before that time. Registration in COMM 900 alerts FGSR that you are prepared to complete the project either by April or August of that year. You may register multiple times in COMM 900, as necessary, without penalty. Tuition is assessed with each registration.

Students who entered the MACT program, in 2010 or earlier will register in COMM 508 for their capstone project.
Developing Your Draft Proposal

Together with your supervisor, you will refine, redevelop (from COMM 501 and 509) or develop a proposal that demonstrates:

- that you have identified an interesting and worthwhile problem for investigation, and;
- that you have the means for conducting a viable investigation within the timeframe available.

Your proposal should follow the format given in the following pages. Every proposal should include a timeline that identifies stages or milestones that can be used to plan your research.

The word length for the proposal should be approximately 2500 words. Your research proposal should contain the following parts:

- Proposed title of the project
- Research question
- Literature review showing the theoretical base of the proposed study
- Objectives of the study
- Hypotheses, where relevant
- Methodology
- Timeline
- Curriculum vitae of the researcher
- Copies of draft research instruments, such as survey forms.

Choosing a Supervisor

Choosing the most appropriate supervisor for you and your topic is very important. We will provide opportunities for you in the Spring Institute to meet potential supervisors. You will also learn more about the student-supervisor relationship in COMM 509, which provides an opportunity to propose a research plan to your potential supervisor during one of the weekly activities. While searching for a supervisor, you are encouraged to interview faculty personally to establish an overlap of interests, a compatible work ethic, and a personal affinity.

It is very important that you and your supervisor establish and maintain a good working relationship. In general, students who maintain regular contact with their supervisors are more successful in their studies than those who do not, although you will also benefit from the support and suggestions of your peers. Supervisors can encourage and guide their students, but the outcome of graduate study ultimately depends on the student’s capacity to benefit from the supervisor’s guidance.

When you embark upon your research, you will, in consultation with your supervisor, negotiate agreements concerning the research to be undertaken, the frequency of supervisory meetings, and a timetable outlining your research program.
Approval of Supervisor
The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) designates the authority to approve the appointment of faculty members as supervisors of student research activities to the MACT program. It is your responsibility to ensure that approval is requested and received. The steps of the approval process is listed below:

- You should have the agreement of a tenure track faculty member to act as supervisor for your final project by the end of COMM 509
- Confirmation by email (to eileen.crookes@ualberta.ca) from both you and the faculty member of this agreement must be sent to the MACT office.

Duties of a Supervisor
The following is what is expected of a supervisor:

- To guide you in the refinement of a topic.
- To assist you in a literature search by giving guidance on relevant literature and advice as to how this may be accessed.
- To advise you on, and assist you in determining, an appropriate methodology for your research.
- To be in contact with you according to your agreed schedule to monitor your progress and provide feedback.
- To make constructive written and verbal comments on the work you submit, within a reasonable amount of time.
- To engage in discussion with you at the agreed times.
- To respond promptly to your email or telephone messages.
- To assess completion of the project and assign the final grade (Pass/Fail)

Your project supervisor is not expected to provide advice and information regarding basic writing matters such as grammar, punctuation, and style. The American Psychological Association (APA) citation style is the standard expected for your project, and you are encouraged to develop your skills in using APA as you complete assignments for your first two or three core courses. Investing in a current edition of the APA Manual will serve you well through your program of study.
Your Obligations to Your Supervisor

- Be in contact with your supervisor as agreed.
- Undertake the work that you and your supervisor agreed would be completed before each meeting.
- Respond promptly to telephone or email messages.

Please note that any questions you may have about the MACT program that go beyond the scope of the project should be directed to either your academic advisor, the program director or MACT administrative staff.

Changing Project Supervisor

Sometimes it is necessary for a student to change project supervisors. You are encouraged to discuss this with your supervisor. If you and your supervisor agree that a change of supervisor is appropriate:

Confirmation of the agreement to dissolve the student/supervisor arrangement from both the you and the supervisor is required by email to the Communications and Technology office at eileen.crookes@ualberta.ca

Confirmation by email from the new supervisor to the Communications and Technology office at eileen.crookes@ualberta.ca is required.

Supervisory Meetings

The supervisory relationship for the final project in MACT is largely a distance relationship. However, for purposes of discussion, exchanges with your supervisors will be referred to herein as “meetings.” The frequency of supervisory meetings will vary during the course of your project. You will find that you may need more guidance in the early stages of your project.

It is important not to discount the value of communicating even when things seem to be progressing smoothly. Your meetings should have a mutually agreed focus and should, wherever possible, be based on written material that you have produced for that purpose, preferably supplied to your supervisor two or three days prior to the meeting so that your work can be given proper consideration.

Your supervisor will read and comment on drafts of your work, but the completeness and quality of the final version is your responsibility. The final marking of your work may well take into account material that was present in a draft but not commented on.

You can expect your supervisor to comment on the overall structure of your drafts and on points of detail, including matters of prose style and referencing. Reading drafts and commenting on them is a time-consuming business, and your supervisor will responsibility for supervision of other students and providing feedback to those
students while working with you.

You do not need your supervisor’s permission to solicit comments from others on your drafts. If you do receive substantial help from readers other than your supervisor, you should acknowledge their help in the appropriate place in the final version of your work.

**Establishing a Supervisor / Student Contract**

It is very important that you and your supervisor establish and maintain a good working relationship. In general, students who make use of supervision are more successful in their studies than those who do not, although you will also benefit from the support and suggestions of your peers. Supervisors can encourage and guide their students, but the outcome of graduate study ultimately depends on the student’s capacity to benefit from the supervisor’s guidance. Below is a template of a contract that you may wish to set up with your supervisor.

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Student signature  

Supervisor signature

Date
Potential Supervisors

The professoriate in the Faculty of Extension offers a wide range of content expertise upon which to draw for your final project. Listed below, with their areas of expertise, are those who may be considered to be potential supervisors.

Dr. Thomas Barker: human communication; risk communication; knowledge studies

Dr. Mary Beckie: sustainable communities

Dr. Katy Campbell: gender and technology; learning design; lifeworld of the designer; learning design as transformative practice; qualitative methods

Dr. Fay Fletcher: collaborative and community based research; culture and diversity; adult education

Professor Lois Gander: non-profit organizations

Dr. Rebecca Gokiert: early childhood measurement and evaluation; psycho-educational assessment; cross-cultural issues in measurement; validity; community-based research and evaluation

Dr. Gordon Gow: social processes that influence policymaking for media and communications; philosophy of technology; history/theory of communications media; design studies; organizational communication

Dr. Martin Guardado: second language acquisition; language socialization; heritage language development; culturally- and linguistically-diverse students; technology and education; ethnography; discourse analysis

Dr. Yoshitaka Iwasaki: culture, diversity and health; active living, coping/ healing and quality of life; community based research

Dr. Maria Mayan: qualitative inquiry; community-based research (CBR); systems collaboration

Dr. Rob McMahon: community-based technology development; communication policy; policy advocacy; community engagement; journalism studies

Dr. Kent Rondeau: high performance work practices; attraction and retention of health care employess; aboriginal health services

Dr. Kristof Van Assche: innovation and evolution of governance; rural development; theory of development and planning

Dr. Rob Shields: regional geography; urban planning

Dr. Stanley Varnhagen: use of technology in instruction; applied educational research; interactive instructional technologies (e.g., cd-rom, internet); sociology of education; individual differences and cognitive development

Dr. Kyle Whitfield: group facilitation; health service planning; planning for an aging population; qualitative research methods
CHOOSING A TOPIC

into clear focus in COMM 501, preceding the development of your draft project proposal as that course’s major assignment. You will further refine your topic in COMM 509, during which you conduct a comprehensive literature review on past research about it.

You have considerable scope in your choice of topic, subject to the constraints of the feasibility of the topic and the availability of appropriate supervision. However, the problem should be narrow enough in scope so that it can be completed within the allotted time frame. The MACT emphasizes the relevance of its content to the contemporary workplace and society. This does not preclude more theoretical work associated with the workplace. The process of choosing an appropriate research topic is covered in COMM 501 and COMM 509.

Although you submitted a proposal for research with your application package, you are not bound to that idea. Ideas for possible topics may come from work undertaken from courses, from your private study, from discussions with colleagues or faculty, from the literature, or from your workplace. Academic staff will gladly discuss the choice of topic with you; however, faculty will not present you with a topic. Ideally, you should find a topic that holds great interest for you as you will spend much time developing this area. The formulation of a topic may well involve a considerable amount of preparatory work, and so is discussed in detail in COMM 501 and 509.

- Final topic approval will come from your academic supervisor. Capstone projects that are not within the field of communications and technology will not normally be approved. Helpful points in choosing a topic:
  - What intrinsic interest does your topic area hold for you? Your chances of succeeding will be greater if the topic interests you.
  - Your employer may have a topic that needs investigation. A routine work report prepared in the course of your employment does not constitute a research report. The project must be your own work and you may not submit any document that contains a substantial amount of collaboration work.
  - Read recent high quality academic and professional journals in your area of interest to familiarize yourself with current issues in the field.
  - Your research may expand upon studies from your other courses.
  - Be sure to choose a topic that can be contained within the constraints of the
DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE CAPSTONE PROJECT

Overview
In the capstone project, you will be studying a problem in depth and gaining hands-on experience in designing and conducting an applied research project. You will directly experience the difficulties inherent in research and will gain an appreciation of the essentially tentative nature of the knowledge, evidence and data available to researchers and scholars in the social sciences.

Some comments follow on the different parts of the capstone project.

Length:
The applied research project should be 60 - 80 pages (double spaced). It should be concise, follow a logical sequence, and contain all the requisite components, including bibliographic references. You should refer clearly to appendices.

Style:
The final project should be written in formal academic style in accordance with the requirements of the current APA style guide.

You should provide appendices which detail all primary evidence collected, any correspondence, and details of any questionnaires or interview schedules. These are not included in the word count.

Projects should be word-processed and double spaced. Font must be Times New Roman 12 point. Individual entries in the bibliography may be single-spaced, but you should double space between entries.

Your submitted project must have the title, author’s full name (including your middle name) and year on the title page. (See Appendix A for required format)

Cited references should be accurate and consistent. This is a requirement of good scholarship.

Ensure that there are no typographical or grammatical errors. The use of a third
party proof-reader is recommended. Keep in mind that your work will be posted to the UAlberta Libraries ERA website

Components of the Capstone Project

Preliminary pages (do not number these pages)

Title page - See Appendix A for required format

Acknowledgements page - It is usual practice to acknowledge supervisors, and anyone who has offered particular assistance, while respecting confidentiality.

Disclaimers- Required when projects make recommendations upon which an organization or individual might act.

Table of Contents- Specifying chapters and/or sections and their page numbers in the main body of the project.

Abstract page - A brief description (150 – 200 words) of the work. This should include a short description of the research problem, a brief comment on the direction taken; and a summary of the conclusion.

Main body of project

The main body of your project contains the following parts:

Introduction

A general background to the problem that is meaningful to a reader unfamiliar with the area. Discuss why this study is worthwhile. The introduction includes the problem statement.

Problem and Research Question. A general statement of the problem followed by specific question(s) that will be explored.

Literature Review

The literature review provides a theoretical perspective that directly relates to the problem. It interprets and synthesizes relevant ideas and concepts. This literature should give direction to, and guide the design of, the study. It will also provide a context in which to interpret and discuss the findings. Basic values and assumptions will be revealed through the selection and interpretation of the literature but should be explicitly stated as well.

Methodology

This is a detailed description about how the study will be conducted. The methodology will include descriptions of the sources of data, construction of data/collection techniques/instrumentation, description of the sample or participants, data/collection procedures, and methods of analysis.
Findings
Present a clear description of the findings along with the procedures used to sort, code and interpret the data. Evidence must be presented that supports the categorization, theory or interpretation.

Discussion/Conclusion
This section includes the summary/ conclusions of the findings, consideration of weaknesses and validity issues, and directions for future research.

And, at the end...

Following the main text of the project are these two parts:

References
This is a complete listing of all references using APA Style.

Appendix
The appendix should include materials (such as the survey questionnaire used or the informed consent agreement provided to respondents) that are important for a clear understanding of the study but too cumbersome to be included in the body of the text.

Project Assessment
Your project supervisor will be responsible for determining that your final project has been completed satisfactorily and will submit a grade of Pass or Fail for COMM 900/COMM 508. To assist in this process, a second MACT faculty member will review your final project submission. In addition to the grade, there will be other comments to assist you in understanding why the work received the grade given.

The criteria used for assessment include the demonstration of the following:

- identify, clarify, and investigate a problem/topic;
- apply theory to practice;
- locate, analyze, and integrate relevant literature;
- gather, analyze, and interpret data;
- consider the application of the findings of the study;
- satisfactorily complete a comprehensive project that represents an original contribution to professional knowledge and practice in the field of communications and technology.

You are expected to use the APA (American Psychological Association) citation style, and to write clearly and economically. Your final draft must be free of typos and spelling mistakes.
Plagiarism

Although you will benefit from discussing your final project with colleagues and associates, you must be aware of the fine line between such exchanges and collaboration or plagiarism and other academic offences.

Normally, academic offences such as plagiarism result in disciplinary action. For more information, please refer to the Truth in Education website. This site also provides a link to the Code of Student Behaviour which contains relevant information about academic integrity.

Academic Integrity Graduate Handbook

ETHICS, PERMISSIONS, DISCLAIMERS, COPYRIGHT

Ethics and Disclaimers

Because the University of Alberta enjoys a strong association with the community and with associated workplaces, and because we appreciate their goodwill and cooperation, we endeavour to maintain high standards of courtesy, professionalism, and adherence to ethical and confidentiality guidelines. As a student researcher at the University of Alberta, you are entrusted with maintaining our reputation. Depending on the methodology you employee in your research project, you may need to make an application to Research Ethics. Your project supervisor will guide you in this decision.

Please make every effort, in dealing with outside persons or organizations, to be professional and courteous. You should identify yourself, your status and the name and nature of your project. You should also provide contact information for both yourself and your supervisor.

This information is most often contained in a letter that outlines to prospective respondents, employers, and/or workplaces, the nature and intent of your final project as you seek permission to access them or their data. The letter should also address issues of confidentiality, data collection, handling and methodology, data storage, and ultimately, data disposal.

This letter should be sent on university letterhead and a digital template can be obtained from the MACT office. Any formal written materials (letters, questionnaires) associated with data gathering must be approved by your supervisor before being sent.

A sample letter/consent form can be found in Appendix B.
Ethics Guidelines

The University of Alberta requires high ethical standards in the conduct of all research projects.

All research involving human subjects is subject to the Faculty’s Research Ethics Board and will require its approval before data collection may begin.

If your project involved human subjects or respondents, you must discuss its ethical implications with your supervisor. It is your responsibility to ensure you have appropriate permission to undertake your research.

The principles guiding the Research Ethics Board are as follows:

- Informed consent free of coercion
- Avoidance of conflict of interest
- Respect for rights of privacy and confidentiality
- Minimization of risk of harm to subjects
- Special care taken of vulnerable participants (i.e., children)
- Reporting of data findings back to participants

Applications are made via the Research and Ethics Management Online (REMO) application system

Any data collected before approval has been granted may be deemed unusable and could put your project in jeopardy. Therefore, DO NOT begin data collection until your ethics application has been approved.

Data, Storage and Disposal

Original date collection for your research project must be stored securely. For hard copy data (i.e. paper survey) this means storage in a locked cabinet in a locked room. Digital records must be password protected. University of Alberta General Faculties Council policy requires secure storage for five years before secure disposal.

Copyright

As author, you retain the copyright to your project.

In conformity with the Copyright Act, there must be no substantial amount of copyrighted material in the project. Please consult the section, Copyright Material, in the Thesis Handbook, available from Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in hard copy, or on their website.
MANAGING YOUR CAPSTONE PROJECT

The project, while not a thesis, presents nevertheless a large and ambitious task that will benefit from your careful planning and management. You are responsible for scheduling your own work program in order to meet your timeline. The organizational skills necessary to complete your research successfully are important parts of the graduate experience and will complement the topic expertise and knowledge that you will acquire. You will cover some of these issues in COMM 509, which focuses on research design and leads into your Capstone project.

Graduate students completing their research can have a sense of working alone and in isolation. Often, the end of scheduled classes signals the beginning of a long, lonely stretch for graduate students, with no consistent source of support, encouragement, or academic collegiality. Maintaining your relationship with your project supervisor through regular email or phone meetings is crucial to your success.

Here are some helpful hints:

Plan your time well, taking into account the time needed to write up your research. Writing as you go often allows you to formulate your approach in manageable stages, instead of facing a mountain of data at the end.

Be vigilant with your data collection. Know when to stop so that you don’t end up with far more material than you can handle.

Discuss difficulties immediately with your supervisor.

Keep a project journal where you record everything connected to the project: sources, references, dates, meetings, insights, quotes, and so on.

Back up your computer files. Do not needlessly lose important data!

Keep notes from your meetings with your supervisor.

Stay in close contact with your peers. Support each other.

Graduation Requirements and Timeline

There are two convocation ceremonies in an academic year. One convocation ceremony is in June (spring) and the other occurs in November (fall).

Those students who do not meet graduation requirements in the spring and therefore hope to graduate in the fall should plan to complete their final project (COMM 900/COMM 508) by 25 August. Students must be aware that they will be charged a program continuation fee and any other fees as levied by the University of Alberta as a result of not completing the degree within two years.
It is your responsibility to ensure that any transfer credit has been entered into your student record by both the MACT program office and FGSR. Your project supervisor ensures that the “Report of Completion of Course-Based Master’s Degree” form has been signed by her/him supervisor and also by the program Director and submitted to FGSR.

**Submitting your Capstone project**

While you may take pleasure in celebrating the completion of your final project, its life with the Communications and Technology program and the University of Alberta has only just begun! It will become part of the growing collection of MACT capping projects in the University of Alberta Libraries Education and Research Archive.

The Communications and Technology Graduate Program Community on ERA can be found at [http://hdl.handle.net/10402/era.32481](http://hdl.handle.net/10402/era.32481)

Because each project comprises such an intense and thorough body of knowledge, an applied program such as the MACT is especially interested in integrating your research findings into learning experiences for the MACT students that follow in your footsteps.

To this end, you will be asked to submit the finished project to the MACT program as a PDF, along with an extended abstract and the author permission form.

Please remember that proper formatting of your project is required and is outlined in the “Detailed Description of the Final Project” section of this document

**Author Permission Form**

Working with the University of Alberta Library, MACT has established a community on ERA (Education and Research Archive) in which the capping projects of our graduates will be housed. ERA allows open access to University of Alberta intellectual content which will make the research and scholarship of our MACT graduates publicly searchable and available to read. Each student project will receive a permanent URL when posted.
Deadlines For Convocation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SPRING</th>
<th>FALL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed project signed off (accepted as passed) by supervisor. Completion form submitted to MACT office</td>
<td>25 March</td>
<td>25 August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student submit to MACT office</td>
<td>25 March</td>
<td>25 August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Full research project</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Author permission -ERA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apply for convocation on Bear Tracks</td>
<td>Check Bear Tracks for deadline</td>
<td>Check Bear Tracks for deadline</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A
Sample Title Page

Project Title

By
Your Full Name

Submitted to the Faculty of Extension
University of Alberta
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Communications and Technology

Date
Appendix B
Sample Cover Letter/Consent Form

The following example represents one approach to constructing this document. It is acceptable to create a format that works for you as long as the criteria are met.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Formative Evaluation of the Distance Delivery of the MACT Courses</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Investigator/researcher:
Stanley Varnhagen
492-3641
stanley.varnhagen@ualberta.ca

**Purpose of the Study:**
The MACT program is an exciting new master’s program for working professionals who manage communication issues and practices in a digital world. In order to allow students to continue working while learning, most courses are delivered on-line using asynchronous technologies.

This proposal outlines an extensive evaluation of the instructional technology used to deliver MACT courses.

Currently, the evaluation concerns itself with COMM 550, An Introduction to Electronic Commerce, the first MACT course to be delivered on-line.

COMM 550, which began in January 2000, has 19 students enrolled and continues to May, 2000.

Funding for the evaluation is partially provided by the Alberta Government through its Learning Enhancement Envelope.

**Methodology**
Participants will include current students. There are two phases to this evaluation:

**Mid-Course Evaluation**
Current MACT students will be asked to complete an online survey mid-course. Soon after completing this survey, some students will also be asked to participate in a focused course discussion. This evaluation will be more open-ended. Intended to see what students’ views are currently. The focus of these evaluations will be in providing information back to the program that will allow course improvement, especially for the current courses.
End of Course Evaluation
The procedure will be repeated at the end of the course, with both an on-line survey and a focused discussion. This evaluation will be more detailed, and will focus on improving the course the next time it is offered.

Confidentiality
All information collected will be coded to protect the participant’s anonymity and participants will be directed to not put any identifying information on surveys. Prior to releasing aggregated data to MACT program administrators, any identifying indicators will be removed. No information will be released until after course grades have been issued. Completion of these surveys is totally voluntary and will in no way affect your grades.

Time Commitment
The time required to complete the mid-course or exit survey is approximately one-half hour. Approximately 45 minutes will be required of those persons asked to participate in interviews or focus group.

Funding Agency
This project is partially funded by a Learning Enhancement Envelope (LEE) grant from Alberta Learning.

Any Questions?
Please contact Stanley Varnhagen, Faculty of Extension at stanley.varnhagen@ualberta.ca or 492-3641.

Withdrawal from Study
You are free to withdraw from the research study at any time without any adverse consequences. There are no known risks or personal benefits from participation in this study.

Participant Informed Consent
I acknowledge that the research procedures have been explained to me, and that any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. In addition, I know that I may contact the person designated on this form, if I have further questions either now or in the future. I have been assured that the personal records relating to this study will be kept anonymous. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time and I will not be asked to provide a reason.

(Date)

(Printed Name of Participant) ________________________________ (Signature of Participant) ________________________________

(Printed Name of Investigator) ________________________________ (Signature of Investigator) ________________________________