As the environment for public and private communication becomes increasingly complex, organizations rely more and more heavily on thoughtful and effective communication professionals. To this end, Communication MA students may choose to specialize in strategic communication/public relations, health communication or science communication. They may also choose an individualized specialization in communication studies according to their interests. Across all specializations, students receive a strong foundation in communication theory and learn to design, execute, and interpret rigorous communication research. Students are challenged to apply communication knowledge to help solve problems and to address important social issues.

### Core Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMM 600</td>
<td>Introduction to Graduate Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 798</td>
<td>Communication Studies Project (only 3 credits can apply to the degree)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 650</td>
<td>Research Methodologies in Communication (required course)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select one course from the following:</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 725</td>
<td>Qualitative Methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 750</td>
<td>Research Methods II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 775</td>
<td>Media Content Analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Specializations

Students complete two program core courses, two methods courses, two theory courses, two specialization and at least three elective courses (or 9 credits), of which 3 credits may be thesis.

Students must choose from one area of specialization (strategic communication/public relations, health communication, science communication, or individualized communication studies). Specific requirements are described below.

### Requirements

**Degree Requirements**

Total credits: 33

Students should be aware of the specific policies associated with this program, located on the Admissions & Policies tab.
- Science Communication
- Individualized Communication Studies specialization

**Strategic Communications/Public Relations Specialization**
The specialization in strategic communication/public relations requires a minimum of two courses from the list below. A course taken as a part of the general program cannot be duplicated in credits, but it can count as a course required for the specialization. Additional credits may be met through electives.

### Code | Title | Credits
---|---|---
**Two Specialization Courses** | | 
Select two specialization courses from the following: | 6 |
COMM 590 | Seminar in Communication | 1
COMM 602 | Theories and Research of Mass Communication | 
COMM 615 | Political Communication | 
COMM 630 | Theories of Public Relations | 
COMM 632 | Persuasion Theory | 
COMM 636 | Communication Consulting | 
COMM 637 | Risk Communication | 
COMM 642 | Science and the Public | 
COMM 660 | Climate Change and Sustainability Communication Campaigns | 
COMM 670 | Social Marketing | 
COMM 690 | Special Topics in Communication | 1
COMM 696 | Directed Readings and Research | 
COMM 706 | Strategic Communication | 
COMM 716 | International Public Relations | 
COMM 735 | Crisis Communication | 
COMM 820 | Health Communication Campaigns | 
COMM 890 | Special Topics in Communication | 1

**Optional Thesis** | | 
Three credits of | 3
COMM 799 | Master’s Thesis | 

**Electives** | | 
Six to nine additional credits chosen from: | 6-9
Courses from the list above | 
Any other graduate COMM course ([http://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/comm/](http://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/comm/)) | 
Up to 6 credits of coursework from other departments with prior written approval of the program director. | 

### Total Credits | 15
1 When topic is strategic communication, as approved by program director.
2 Students who do not choose to complete a thesis will take additional credits of elective. Students who choose to write a thesis should be aware of the policies governing theses as stated in AP6.9.3 Master’s Thesis ([http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-9-3](http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-9-3)). If a thesis is chosen, students must follow the thesis enrollment policy of the university and, once enrolled in COMM 799 Master’s Thesis, maintain continuous enrollment.
3 Students choosing to write a thesis take 6 credits of electives. Those opting out of the thesis take 9 credits.

### Health Communication Specialization
The specialization in health communication requires a minimum of two courses from the list below. A course taken as a part of the general program cannot be duplicated in credits, but it can count as a course required for the specialization. Additional credits may be met through electives.

### Code | Title | Credits
---|---|---
**Two Specialization Courses** | | 
Select two specialization courses from the following: | 6
COMM 590 | Seminar in Communication | 1
COMM 620 | Health Communication | 
COMM 632 | Persuasion Theory | 
COMM 690 | Special Topics in Communication | 1
COMM 696 | Directed Readings and Research | 
COMM 705 | Intercultural Health and Risk Communication | 
COMM 720 | Consumer-Provider Health Communication | 
COMM 721 | E-Health Communication | 
COMM 820 | Health Communication Campaigns | 
COMM 890 | Special Topics in Communication | 1

**Optional Thesis** | | 
Three credits of | 3
COMM 799 | Master’s Thesis | 

**Electives** | | 
Six to nine additional credits chosen from: | 6-9
Additional courses from the list above | 
Any other graduate COMM course ([http://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/comm/](http://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/comm/)) | 
Up to 6 credits of coursework from other departments with prior written approval of the program director. | 

### Total Credits | 15
1 When topic is health communication as approved by program director.
2 Students who do not choose to complete a thesis will take additional credits of elective courses. Students who choose to write a thesis should be aware of the policies governing theses as stated in AP6.9.3 Master’s Thesis ([http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-9-3](http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-9-3)). If a thesis is chosen, students must follow the thesis enrollment policy of the university and, once enrolled in COMM 799 Master’s Thesis, maintain continuous enrollment.
3 Students choosing to write a thesis take 6 credits of electives. Those opting out of the thesis take 9 credits.

**Science Communication Specialization**
Students who wish to focus their graduate study in science communication complete the following requirements.

### Code | Title | Credits
---|---|---
**Two Specialization Courses** | | 
Select two specialization courses from the following: | 6
COMM 637 | Risk Communication | 
COMM 639 | Science Communication | 
COMM 640 | Controversies in Science Communication |
COMM 641  Advanced Communication Skills for STEM
COMM 642  Science and the Public
COMM 644  Analysis and Criticism of Science Journalism
COMM 660  Climate Change and Sustainability Communication Campaigns
COMM 696  Directed Readings and Research

Optional Thesis ¹

Three credits of 3
COMM 799  Master’s Thesis

Electives ²

Six to nine credits chosen from: 6-9
Additional courses from the list above
Any other graduate COMM course (http://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/comm/)
Up to 6 credits of coursework from other departments with prior written approval of the program director.

Total Credits 15

¹ Students who do not choose to complete a thesis will take additional credits of elective courses. Students who choose to write a thesis should be aware of the policies governing theses as stated in AP6.9.3 Master’s Thesis (http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-9-3). If a thesis is chosen, students must follow the thesis enrollment policy of the university and, once enrolled in COMM 799 Master’s Thesis, maintain continuous enrollment.

² Students choosing to write a thesis take 6 credits of electives. Those opting out of the thesis take 9 credits.

Individualized Communication Studies specialization
Students pursuing a specialization in individualized communication studies design a program of courses to reflect their interests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
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<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two Specialization Courses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select from the following: ¹</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 590</td>
<td>Seminar in Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 690</td>
<td>Special Topics in Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Special Topics in Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Optional Thesis ²</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three credits of</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 799</td>
<td>Master’s Thesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Electives ³

Six to nine credits chosen from: 6-9
Additional courses from the list above
Any other graduate COMM course (http://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/comm/)
Up to 6 credits of coursework from other departments with prior written approval of the program director.

Total Credits 15

¹ Two courses in a field of specialization are chosen in consultation with an advisor or the program director. These courses may include select special topics courses shown above as approved by the program director.

² Students who do not choose to complete a thesis will take additional credits of elective courses. Students who choose to write a thesis should be aware of the policies governing theses as stated in AP6.9.3 Master’s Thesis (http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-9-3). If a thesis is chosen, students must follow the thesis enrollment policy of the university and, once enrolled in COMM 799 Master’s Thesis, maintain continuous enrollment.

³ Students choosing to write a thesis take 6 credits of electives. Those opting out of the thesis take 9 credits.

Accelerated Master’s

Communication, BA/Communication, Accelerated MA

Overview
Highly qualified Mason students may apply to the accelerated master’s degree program. If accepted, students will be able to earn a Bachelor’s and a MA in communication after satisfactory completion of as few as 147 credits, sometimes within five years. For more detailed information, see AP6.7 Bachelor’s/ Accelerated Master’s Degrees (http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-7).

Students in an accelerated degree program must fulfill all university requirements for the master’s degree. For policies governing all graduate degrees, see AP6 Graduate Policies (http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/).

Application Requirements
Applicants to all graduate programs at George Mason University must meet the admission standards and application requirements for graduate study as specified in Graduate Admissions (http://catalog.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-policies/). For information specific to the accelerated MA in communication, see Application Requirements and Deadlines (http://communication.gmu.edu/programs/LA-MA-ACEL-COM/)

Accelerated Option Requirements

While undergraduate students, accelerated master’s students complete COMM 600 Introduction to Graduate Studies and one of the following theory courses: COMM 602 Theories and Research of Mass Communication, COMM 605 Intercultural Communication, COMM 620 Health Communication, COMM 632 Persuasion Theory, COMM 634 Theories of Interpersonal Communication, COMM 639 Organizational Communication, or COMM 639 Science Communication. Accelerated master’s students must earn a minimum grade of 3.00 in each course. Once admitted to the accelerated master’s pathway, students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.25 in all coursework. Upon completion and conferral of the undergraduate degree in the semester indicated in the application, they submit the Bachelor’s/Accelerated Master’s Transition Form and are admitted to graduate status. As graduate students, accelerated master’s students have an advanced standing. They must meet all master’s degree requirements, except the two courses (6 credits) they completed as undergraduates. Students must begin their master’s program the semester immediately following conferral of the undergraduate degree.
Reserve Graduate Credit

Students may take up to 6 additional graduate credits at the 600 level, excluding COMM 650. These credits do not apply to the undergraduate degree. To apply these credits to the master’s degree, students should use the Bachelor’s/Accelerated Master’s Transition Form.

The ability to take courses, including ones not listed above, for reserve graduate credit is available to all high achieving undergraduates with the permission of the department. Permission is normally granted only to qualified Mason seniors within 15 hours of graduation. See AP.1.4.4 Graduate Course Enrollment by Undergraduates (http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/registration-attendance/#ap-1-4-4).