

COMMUNICATION, MA

Banner Code: LA-MA-COM

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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.

Admissions & Policies

Admissions

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

Admission to the graduate program in communication is competitive.

Policies

For policies governing all graduate degrees, see Graduate Policies.

Transfer of Credit/Reduction of Credit

Students may request transfer of up to 15 hours of graduate coursework from graduate non-degree status or from graduate study at another institution, or request a reduction of credit up to 6 hours based on a previously conferred graduate degree. Students should carefully review AP6.5 and the policies governing graduate transfer of credit and reduction of credit. Transfer and reduction of credit is subject to the approval of the program director and graduate dean.

Requirements

Degree Requirements

Total credits: 33

Students should be aware of the specific policies associated with this program, located on the Admissions & Policies tab.

Students complete two program core courses, two methods courses, two theory courses, one practicum course, two specialization and at least two elective courses (or 6 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.

Core Courses

Code	Title	Credits
Two Core Courses		
COMM 600	Introduction to Graduate Studies	3
COMM 798	Communication Studies Project	3
Two Methods Courses		
COMM 650	Research Methodologies in Communication (required course)	3
Select one course from the following:		3
COMM 725	Qualitative Methods	
COMM 750	Research Methods II	
COMM 775	Media Content Analysis	
Other graduate level methods course, taken in COMM or elsewhere, as approved by graduate director.		
Two Theory Courses		
Select two theory courses from the following:		6
COMM 602	Theories and Research of Mass Communication	
COMM 605	Intercultural Communication	
COMM 620	Health Communication	
COMM 630	Theories of Public Relations	
COMM 632	Persuasion Theory	
COMM 634	Theories of Interpersonal Communication	
COMM 635	Organizational Communication	
COMM 639	Science Communication	
COMM 642	Science and the Public	
COMM 706	Strategic Communication	
One Practicum Course ¹		
Select one practicum course from the following:		3
COMM 604	Communication Research Practicum	
COMM 636	Communication Consulting	
COMM 641	Advanced Communication Skills for STEM	
COMM 653	Graduate Seminar in Instructional Communication	
COMM 655	Theory and Practice of Digital Communication	
COMM 660	Climate Change and Sustainability Communication Campaigns	
COMM 670	Social Marketing	
COMM 694	Communication Internship	
COMM 697	Independent Production	
COMM 721	E-Health Communication	
COMM 820	Health Communication Campaigns	

Total Credits 21

¹ Other courses, including special topics (COMM 590 Seminar in Communication or COMM 690 Special Topics in Communication) and independent study, can be used to fulfill this requirement with prior written approval of the program director.

Specializations

Students complete the degree by completing 6 credits of coursework in one of the four specializations and an additional 6 elective credits in any graduate coursework, to include an optional thesis. Courses outside the department require the prior written approval of the program director.

Available Specializations

- Strategic Communications/Public Relations Specialization
- Health Communication Specialization
- 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 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 ²		
Three credits of		3
COMM 799	Master's Thesis	
Electives ³		
Three to six additional credits chosen from:		3-6
Courses from the list above		
Any other graduate COMM courses		
Up to 6 credits of coursework from other departments with prior written approval of the program director.		
Total Credits		12

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 AP.6.9.3 Master's Thesis. 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 3 credits of electives. Those opting out of a thesis take 6 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 ²		
Three credits of		3
COMM 799	Master's Thesis	
Electives ³		
Three to six credits chosen from:		3-6
Additional courses from the list above		
Any other graduate COMM course		
Up to 6 credits of coursework from other departments with prior written approval of the program director.		
Total Credits		12

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 AP.6.9.3 Master's Thesis. 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 3 credits of electives. Those opting out of the thesis take 6 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		
Three to six credits chosen from:		3-6
Additional courses from the list above		
Any other graduate COMM course		
Up to 6 credits of coursework from other departments with prior written approval of the program director.		
Total Credits		12

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 AP.6.9.3 Master's Thesis. 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 3 credits of electives. Those opting out of the thesis take 6 credits.

Individualized Communication Studies specialization

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

Code	Title	Credits
Two Specialization Courses		
Select from the following: ¹		6
COMM 590	Seminar in Communication	
COMM 690	Special Topics in Communication	
COMM 890	Special Topics in Communication	
Optional Thesis ²		
Three credits of		3
COMM 799	Master's Thesis	
Electives		
Three to six credits chosen from: ³		3-6
Additional courses from the list above		
Any other graduate COMM course		

Up to 6 credits of coursework from other departments with prior written approval of the program director.

Total Credits 12

- 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.
- 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 AP.6.9.3 Master's Thesis. 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.
- Students choosing to write a thesis take 3 credits of electives. Those opting out of the thesis take 6 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 AP.6.7 Bachelor's/Accelerated Master's Degrees.

Students in an accelerated degree program must fulfill all university requirements for the master's degree. For policies governing all graduate degrees, see AP.6 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. For information specific to the accelerated MA in communication, see Application Requirements and Deadlines (<http://communication.gmu.edu/programs/LA-MA-ACEL-COM/application>).

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 635 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 course work. 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.