

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION
THE MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION

The Master of Arts in Communication provides a foundation in communication theory and research and emphasizes intra/interdisciplinary connections in applied contexts. Thirty semester hours of graduate credit and completion of a capstone experience are required for graduation.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Students must complete the University application and must satisfy the general admission requirements of the Graduate College. Students applying to the Communication master's degree program must have completed undergraduate work in communication, speech or allied disciplines and have achieved at least a 3.0 grade point average in their last two years of course work. Additional course work may be required at the time of admission into the program, as deemed necessary by the Director of Graduate Studies. Undergraduate transcripts, graduate transcripts (where applicable), three letters of recommendation (including WMU Graduate Reference Forms), and evidence of academic interest (on School of Communication Graduate Information Form) and a writing sample (academic or professional) are required.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

COMMUNICATION FOUNDATIONS (6 HOURS)

Select two of the following:

COM 6450: Mass Communication

COM 6740: Interpersonal Communication

COM 6820: Organizational Communication

RESEARCH FOUNDATIONS (6 HOURS)

COM 6010: Introduction to Communication Theory and Research

Select one of the following:

COM 6020: Quantitative Communication Research

COM 6050: Qualitative Communication Research

COMMUNICATION ELECTIVES (18 HOURS)

Students will develop an individualized program of study reflecting a focused area of concentration, in consultation with a faculty advisor. A program of study may

incorporate up to 6 hours of coursework outside the department with the written approval of the graduate committee.

CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

Master's degree students must complete a capstone experience in partial fulfillment of their requirements for graduation. The capstone experience shall consist of completion of a Master's thesis or completion of comprehensive examinations.

Thesis option: The thesis project consists of completion of a research paper in which the student proposes and tests new ideas, replicates an existing study, or advances theoretical understanding of an issue. The thesis must demonstrate scholarly abilities, including solid conceptualization, analysis, and writing. The thesis must clearly define the problem to be investigated, demonstrate mastery of relevant academic literature, and show competence in the relevant methodology and analysis techniques. The thesis shall consist of six credit hours and shall be considered part of the communication electives.

Comprehensive examination option: The comprehensive examination option requires the student to demonstrate his/her knowledge of a substantive area within communication and to demonstrate a capacity to integrate theory, research, and practice in response to comprehensive questions developed by the faculty of the School of Communication.

Professional Project option: The professional project requires the development, enactment, and assessment of an applied communication experience. The professional project may involve workshops, case studies, training, creation of websites, communication assessments or completion of other projects within the context of the student's chosen area of study. The professional project shall consist of three credit hours and shall be considered part of communication electives.

ACCELERATED DEGREE IN COMMUNICATION

The Accelerated Degree Program (ADP) in Communication allows students to begin accumulating credits towards completion of a master's degree while still enrolled as undergraduates. Undergraduate students admitted to the Communication ADP, with senior standing, may take up to 12 credit hours of designated 5000 and 6000 level courses for graduate credit. These designated courses may be used in completion of both the Bachelor's degree and the Master's degree.

DEGREE HOURS

An undergraduate degree in communication requires a total of 122 credit hours. The Master's in Communication requires a total of 30 credit hours. Students enrolling in the ADP for the maximum 12 graduate credits would earn 140 total undergraduate and graduate credits in contrast to the typical combined 152 undergraduate and graduate credit hours under the usual progression to degree(s).

Students would pay undergraduate tuition for these 6000 level course as undergraduates and the courses will be included in the flat tuition rate. On completion of the under-graduate degree, the student will be re-classified as a graduate student and then will pay graduate tuition rates.

ELIGIBILITY FOR APPLICATION

This program is open to undergraduate students in all of the communication majors: communication studies; interpersonal communication; organizational communication; public relations; journalism; film, video and media studies; and telecommunication and information management.

A student must have senior status and must have earned a minimum of 30 credit hours at Western Michigan University and at least 20 credit hours as a declared major in the School of Communication.

Undergraduate students enrolled in the ADP will be expected to meet graduate expectations in their graduate courses.

Students who have received their baccalaureate degrees will be ineligible to apply for this program and retroactively claim credits to apply toward the MA degree.

The student must meet the established Master's program admission criteria:

1. an undergraduate minimum gpa of 3.0 (based on 30 credit hours earned at WMU and on at least 20 credit hours in a declared major in the School of Communication)
2. three letters of recommendation from academic references (including WMU Graduate Reference Forms)
3. evidence of academic interest (on School of Communication Graduate Information Form) including rationale for admission to ADP
4. an academic writing sample

ADMISSION PROCEDURE

1. As early as possible in the academic junior year, the potential ADP student should contact the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss this ADP option and review the requirements, timelines, and application procedures.
2. Students must apply for admission to the graduate program with the Office of Admissions/Graduate Admissions and must complete the necessary application materials for admission to the Master's program in the School of Communication.
3. Upon acceptance into the ADP, the student must meet together with the Director of Graduate Studies and the undergraduate academic advisor to

prepare an appropriate program of study that meets the requirements for the undergraduate and graduate degrees.

4. A letter advising which graduate courses will be counted in both degrees will be sent to the student and to the Registrar. A copy of this letter also will be included in the student's graduate file.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY AND GRADUATION

1. It is expected that the baccalaureate degree will be awarded within one calendar year after initial ADP enrollment. Students not meeting this time constraint must re-apply to be admitted to the graduate program.
2. In order to progress automatically into the graduate program, the student must achieve a grade of "B" or better in each of the graduate courses being counted for the undergraduate degree. Students who do not meet this requirement will have the earned grade applied to their undergraduate degree only and must apply for readmission into the graduate program. Students who complete the undergraduate degree including a "B" or above in the specified graduate courses will be admitted as graduate students (with the relevant graduate credit) in the next semester or session after receiving the bachelor's degree.
3. A student in the ADP must follow the program of study developed with the Graduate Director and the undergraduate advisor. Failure to follow this program of study may result in ineligibility for the ADP.
4. A student completing the undergraduate degree with a gpa within the major of less than 3.0 will be automatically declared ineligible for the ADP.
5. Students must complete the requirements for the MA degree within 24 months from the completion of the bachelor's degree. Students unable to meet this requirement must apply for an extension with the School of Communication Director of Graduate Studies.
6. Students who have completed the Accelerated Degree Program will have it noted on their undergraduate and graduate transcript.
7. Any student who becomes ineligible to continue participation in the ADP will be notified in writing by The Director of Graduate Studies.

WITHDRAWAL

A student may at any time withdraw from the ADP by informing the Director of the Graduate Program in the School of Communication in writing. A copy of the request to withdraw must be sent to the Graduate Registrar

DESIGNATED ADP ELIGIBLE COMMUNICATION COURSES:

5000 level courses

COM 5410: Telecommunications Law and Policy

COM 5600: Teaching Communication

6000 level courses

COM 6010: Introduction to Communication Inquiry

COM 6020: Quantitative Communication Research

COM 6050: Qualitative Communication Research

COM 6450: Mass Communication

COM 6740: Interpersonal Communication

COM 6820: Organizational Communication

ADMISSION STATUS CATEGORIES

Students making application to the master's program in Communication may be considered for admission in one of the categories described below. Students who are admitted in any category other than General Admission are responsible for understanding the terms of their admission and are responsible for seeking a change of admission status when the terms of their admission have been met.

General Admission: Meets the admission requirements of the University and the School of Communication. All required materials have been received. Enrollment in courses is expected to lead to a degree.

Provisional Admission: Meets many of the admission requirements to the University and the School of Communication and is expected to be formally admissible. Enrollment status is provisional until additional documents or materials for acceptance in the "general admission" category are provided. The time period for any Provisional Admission may not exceed one year from the time of initial PA status with ineligibility for further enrollment after that year.

Conditional Admission: Meets some of the admission requirements of the University and School of Communication. Continued enrollment in courses at WMU is conditional upon the applicant completing academic course work at a performance level specified at the time the Conditional Admission (CA) status is granted. Typically, in the School of Communication, a conditionally admitted student will be required to obtain a grade of B or better in the first nine credit hours of graduate work to include COM 6010 and at least one theory course. The time period for any Conditional Admission status may not

exceed one year from the time of initial CA status. After that time period, if the specified conditions have been met, the applicant is admitted into General Admission status.

Nondegree Admission: Is eligible for enrollment in courses with the understanding that course work taken as a nondegree admission student is for: (a) a certificate program, (b) self-instructional courses, or (c) enrollment as a guest student. Such course work usually will not apply to a WMU degree program. If the nondegree admitted student subsequently decides to apply to a specific WMU degree program after his/her nondegree enrollment, the applicant will be expected to meet all University and program-specific admission requirements. The time period for any single Nondegree Admission status may not exceed four years from the time such status is granted.

Not Admitted: Is not eligible for enrollment in courses or academic programs at WMU. Applicants who receive the Not Admitted status may reapply after one full calendar year for reconsideration for admission at the University.