

MASS COMMUNICATIONS, PHD

The PhD degree in mass communications is an interdisciplinary program offered jointly by the Department of Life Sciences Communication and the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

The program offers several internationally recognized areas of research and teaching excellence:

- civic and political communication
- health and environmental communications
- history of media institutions
- information technologies
- social networking and digital media
- processes and effects of mediated communication
- law and ethics of media
- international and inter-cultural communication
- public opinion
- science and risk communication
- social marketing
- journalism studies
- media ecologies
- race and media

Working closely with their major professor and committee, students draw from courses offered in departments across the campus to develop a plan of study in preparation for independent and original research in their areas of interest.

ADMISSIONS

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Please consult the table below for key information about this degree program's admissions requirements. The program may have more detailed admissions requirements, which can be found below the table or on the program's website.

Graduate admissions is a two-step process between academic programs and the Graduate School. **Applicants must meet the minimum requirements (<https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/>) of the Graduate School as well as the program(s).** Once you have researched the graduate program(s) you are interested in, apply online (<https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/>).

Requirements	Detail
Fall Deadline	December 15
Spring Deadline	The program does not admit in the spring.
Summer Deadline	The program does not admit in the summer.
GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)	May be required in certain cases; consult program.*

English Proficiency Test	Every applicant whose native language is not English, or whose undergraduate instruction was not exclusively in English, must provide an English proficiency test score earned within two years of the anticipated term of enrollment. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Requirements for Admission policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241/).
Other Test(s) (e.g., GMAT, MCAT)	n/a
Letters of Recommendation Required	3

* See details at the Mass Communications PhD admissions webpage (<https://masscommphd.wisc.edu/application/>).

Applicants for this program are expected to have demonstrated an interest and background in communication research by having earned a thesis-based MA or MS degree in communication or other relevant disciplines. The admissions committee, however, may accept other evidence of suitable preparation.

Applicants must meet the minimum requirements for admission set by the Graduate School. Applicants must submit an online application, GRE scores, a statement of purpose, official transcripts from all previously attended institutions, a CV, and three letters of recommendation. Letters of recommendation should come from people who can speak to the scholarly abilities of the applicant. International degree-seeking applicants must prove English proficiency using the Graduate School's requirements (<https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/>). Test scores must be furnished to the school before the application is considered complete.

NOTE: Admissions for the Mass Communications: Life Sciences Communications program is paused for the 2024-25 application cycle while the program is being revitalized.

For more information, visit the Mass Communications PhD website (<https://masscommphd.wisc.edu/>).

FUNDING

FUNDING GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information (<https://grad.wisc.edu/funding/>) is available from the Graduate School. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

Prospective students should see the program website (<https://masscommphd.wisc.edu/funding/>) for funding information.

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum academic progress and degree requirements (<http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirements>), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Face to Face	Evening/ Weekend	Online	Hybrid	Accelerated
Yes	No	No	No	No

Mode of Instruction Definitions

Accelerated: Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students typically take enough credits aimed at completing the program in a year or two.

Evening/Weekend: Courses meet on the UW–Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

Face-to-Face: Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW–Madison Campus.

Hybrid: These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

Online: These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

Requirement Detail	
Minimum Credit Requirement	65 credits
Minimum Residence Credit Requirement	32 credits
Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement	33 credits must be graduate-level coursework. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/).
Overall Graduate GPA Requirement	3.50 GPA required.
Other Grade Requirements	Courses in which the student earns a grade below B do not count toward the 65 credit minimum, but they do count in the cumulative GPA.
Assessments and Examinations	Doctoral students must pass preliminary exams once coursework is completed.

Language Requirements No language requirements.

Graduate School Breadth Requirement Breadth is provided via interdisciplinary training (doctoral minor or graduate/professional certificate requirement waived).

REQUIRED COURSES

65 credits minimum in theory and methods/statistics courses, selected in consultation with the faculty advisor and approved by the Graduate Committee of the student's home department. Attendance of both seminars in the joint seminar sequence (JOURN 901 Colloquium in Mass Communication and LSC 700 Colloquium in Life Sciences Communication) is strongly recommended for new graduate students.

Additional requirements are detailed in the Academic Policies and Procedures Handbook for Graduate Work (<https://journalism.wisc.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/41/files/2017/11/JOINT-Handbook-updated-10-17.pdf>) in the joint PhD program in mass communications.

POLICIES

GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (<https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>) provide essential information regarding general university policies. Program authority to set degree policies beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the degree program faculty. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES

PRIOR COURSEWORK

Graduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions

In consultation with the student's advisor, and with program approval, students are allowed to transfer no more than 33 credits of graduate coursework from other institutions. Coursework earned ten years or more prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

Undergraduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions or UW–Madison

With program approval, up to 7 credits numbered 600 and above from a UW–Madison undergraduate degree are allowed to count toward the degree. Coursework earned ten years or more prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

Credits Earned as a Professional Student at UW–Madison (Law, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Veterinary careers)

In consultation with the student's advisor and with program approval, students may be allowed to transfer professional credits completed at UW–Madison to this program, within constraints noted in the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

Credits Earned as a University Special Student at UW–Madison

In consultation with the student's advisor and with program approval, students are allowed to transfer no more than 12 credits of coursework numbered 600 and above taken as a UW–Madison University Special

student. Coursework taken ten years prior to admission to the doctoral program is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

PROBATION

Doctoral students must do the following to maintain satisfactory progress:

1. Earn a minimum 3.5 cumulative GPA by the end of the second semester in residence and maintain that GPA for the duration of the degree program.
2. Remove grades of Incomplete in the semester following their occurrence. A course proposal cannot be approved until all incompletes are removed.
3. Complete preliminary exams within three to six months of completing coursework.
4. Maintain steady progress toward completion of degree, including final oral exam and deposit of dissertation. Full-time students can expect four to five years; completion will vary for part-time students.

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

Doctoral committees must include at least two members from outside the Department of Life Sciences Communication and the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credits

TIME LIMITS

Refer to the Graduate School: Time Limits (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1221/>) policy.

GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/>)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure>)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>)
 - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (<https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/>)
- Dean of Students Office (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/>) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
- Employee Assistance (<http://www.eao.wisc.edu/>) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
- Employee Disability Resource Office (<https://employeedisabilities.wisc.edu/>) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
- Graduate School (<https://grad.wisc.edu/>) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
- Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/>) (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/>) (for conflicts involving students)
- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (<http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/>) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)
- Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>) (for concerns about discrimination)

For students in the College of Agricultural & Life Sciences: College of Agricultural and Life Sciences: Grievance Policy

In the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS), any student who feels unfairly treated by a member of the CALS faculty or staff has the right to complain about the treatment and to receive a prompt hearing. Some complaints may arise from misunderstandings or communication breakdowns and be easily resolved; others may require formal action. Complaints may concern any matter of perceived unfairness.

To ensure a prompt and fair hearing of any complaint, and to protect the rights of both the person complaining and the person at whom the complaint is directed, the following procedures are used in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. Any student, undergraduate or graduate, may use these procedures, except employees whose complaints are covered under other campus policies.

1. The student should first talk with the person at whom the complaint is directed. Most issues can be settled at this level. Others may be resolved by established departmental procedures.
2. If the student is unsatisfied, and the complaint involves any unit outside CALS, the student should seek the advice of the dean or director of that unit to determine how to proceed.
 - a. If the complaint involves an academic department in CALS the student should proceed in accordance with item 3 below.
 - b. If the grievance involves a unit in CALS that is not an academic department, the student should proceed in accordance with item 4 below.
3. The student should contact the department's grievance advisor within 120 calendar days of the alleged unfair treatment. The departmental administrator can provide this person's name. The grievance advisor will attempt to resolve the problem informally within 10 working days of receiving the complaint, in discussions with the student and the person at whom the complaint is directed.
 - a. If informal mediation fails, the student can submit the grievance in writing to the grievance advisor within 10 working days of the date the student is informed of the failure of the mediation attempt by the grievance advisor. The grievance advisor will provide a copy to the person at whom the grievance is directed.
 - b. The grievance advisor will refer the complaint to a department committee that will obtain a written response from the person at whom the complaint is directed, providing a copy to the student. Either party may request a hearing before the committee. The grievance advisor will provide both parties a written decision within 20 working days from the date of receipt of the written complaint.
 - c. If the grievance involves the department chairperson, the grievance advisor or a member of the grievance committee, these persons may not participate in the review.
 - d. If not satisfied with departmental action, either party has 10 working days from the date of notification of the departmental committee action to file a written appeal to the CALS Equity and Diversity Committee. A subcommittee of this committee will make a preliminary judgement as to whether the case merits

further investigation and review. If the subcommittee unanimously determines that the case does not merit further investigation and review, its decision is final. If one or more members of the subcommittee determine that the case does merit further investigation and review, the subcommittee will investigate and seek to resolve the dispute through mediation. If this mediation attempt fails, the subcommittee will bring the case to the full committee. The committee may seek additional information from the parties or hold a hearing. The committee will present a written recommendation to the dean who will provide a final decision within 20 working days of receipt of the committee recommendation.

4. If the alleged unfair treatment occurs in a CALS unit that is not an academic department, the student should, within 120 calendar days of the alleged incident, take his/her grievance directly to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. The dean will attempt to resolve the problem informally within 10 working days of receiving the complaint. If this mediation attempt does not succeed the student may file a written complaint with the dean who will refer it to the CALS Equity and Diversity Committee. The committee will seek a written response from the person at whom the complaint is directed, subsequently following other steps delineated in item 3d above.

For students in the College of Letters & Science:

Students should contact the department chair or program director with questions about grievances. They may also contact the L&S Academic Divisional Associate Deans, the L&S Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning Administration, or the L&S Director of Human Resources.

OTHER

Applicants are considered for funding as part of the admissions process. We offer a range of funding, including graduate assistantships, fellowships and research scholarship awards.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Take advantage of the Graduate School's professional development resources (<https://grad.wisc.edu/pd/>) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

We offer two research colloquia (JOURN 901 and LSC 700) during the academic year where faculty share their research findings and methods and engage students in lively conversations about how to conduct research. We offer a teaching colloquium (JOURN 902) that explores pedagogical principles and applications that prepare students for teaching careers. Teaching assistantships provide hands-on training.

Within our research groups and centers, graduate students work side by side with faculty and with each other, allowing the senior students to mentor younger students and for faculty to mentor students who are not their advisees. Our graduate students organize and host an annual day-long conference where they present their research in a series of panels, and they present their research at conferences around the world.

We offer a series of professional development workshops for graduate students with faculty and alumni panelists. The topics include: navigating

the academic job market, exploring the non-academic job market, turning a paper into a presentation and how to find funding for research.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. Articulate research problems, potentials, and limits with respect to theory, knowledge, and practice within the field of study. Demonstrating comprehensive and intensive knowledge of the theories, concepts, frameworks, empirical findings, and controversies in the field.
2. Formulate ideas, concepts, designs, and/or techniques beyond the current boundaries of knowledge within the field of study. Demonstrating a comprehensive and intensive knowledge of appropriate and relevant research methods and analytical techniques.
3. Create research or scholarship that makes a substantive contribution to knowledge.
4. Demonstrate breadth within their learning experiences.
5. Advance contributions of the field of study to society.
6. Communicate complex ideas effectively.
7. Foster ethical and professional conduct.

PEOPLE

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Faculty: Professors Brossard (LSC Chair), Culver (SJMC Chair), Downey, Graves, Kim, McLeod, Riddle, Robinson, Rojas, Scheufele (LSC Director of Academic Programs), Shah, Wagner (SJMC Director of Graduate Studies), Xenos. Associate Professors: McGarr, Palmer, Shaw. Assistant Professors: Cascio, Chen, Chinn, Christy, Li, Newman, Wang, Williams-Fayne, Yang.