

# Master of Arts in Communication

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION



Pittsburg State  
University



# Welcome!

The Master of Arts degree in Communication is designed to prepare graduate students for professional and academic careers. It also encourages thoughtful and continuing study in subjects of the student's interest. Subjects include, but are not limited to human communication theory, research methods, media studies, and performance studies. Working with an advisor, a master's degree student in communication can design a program to match an individual's career choice. Qualified candidates may be eligible for assistantships, which provide a tuition waiver and a graduate teaching stipend. Dr. Alicia Mason is the Director of Graduate Studies.

## **Career Opportunities**

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Students who earn a Master of Arts degree in Communication will gain skills in problem-solving, analysis, research methods and scholarly writing. Graduates find employment as:

- community college teaching
- college and high school administrators
- journalists
- public relations consultants
- television production directors
- business managers

## **Admission Requirements**

1. A completed application form to the Pittsburg State Graduate School, including official undergraduate transcripts.
2. A minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0 is required for admittance. With a GPA of 2.7–2.99, an applicant may be admitted with conditional status. Students with conditional status must maintain a 3.0 GPA for the first nine hours of coursework.

3. Students admitted with an undergraduate degree not in Communication may be required to take up to 12 undergraduate credit hours in deficiency courses to be determined by their graduate adviser. Deficiency credits hours do not count toward the student's graduate degree.

**All graduate assistant applicants must:**

1. Fill out the application form (available online).
2. Possess a GPA of 3.0 or above.
3. Provide three references—names and contact information only (if a PSU graduate), or three *written* recommendations (if not a PSU graduate).

**International Student Requirements**

**Documents for Admission for International Students:**

You should present your application documents to the Pittsburg State Graduate School by June 1 for fall admission and by October 1 for spring admission.

1. Complete online application form.
2. Official undergraduate transcript from your college/university submitted to the Pittsburg State Graduate School.
3. TOEFL or Duolingo score\*

**\*Your TOEFL or Duolingo scores determine the courses in which you can enroll.**

Students with a verified TOEFL score of 79 or higher may be admitted to regular academic graduate courses in the Department of Communication. All Students with less than 79 must enroll in the Intensive English Program full- time. The Duolingo score required for MA Communication degree is 100 in each of the four areas of Literacy, Comprehension, Conversation and Production.

## **Program From Beginning To End**

1. Application Process (six weeks prior to beginning program)  
The Pittsburg State Graduate School must receive a completed program application and transcripts from all previously attended institutions before admission into the Graduate Program can be processed.
2. Initial Advisement (before first semester)  
Students should meet with the Director of Graduate Studies and/or your assigned advisor to enroll for his or her first semester of classes (9-12 hours is recommended).
3. Early Responsibilities.  
After consulting with the Director of Graduate Studies, an advisor will be selected in the student's field of study. The new advisor will assist the student in selecting the sequence of classes that will best suit his or her needs.
4. Candidacy  
Upon the completion of a minimum of 9 credit hours (usually at the beginning of the second semester), the student should meet with his or her advisor to complete and file the student's candidacy plan. This includes choosing an option in the master's degree curriculum (see explanation of three options below). A time line for completion should also be established.
5. Preparation for Final Semester.  
The student should meet with his or her advisor to complete the final steps of master's degree option.

## Program of Study

1. All graduate students in communication must enroll in COMM 815: Introduction to Graduate Studies as soon as possible upon entering the program.
2. All graduate students must complete at least 15 hours of 800-level courses during their graduate studies. One is COMM 815: Introduction to Graduate Studies. Students must also complete two additional 800-level *seminar courses*. One of those must be ***EITHER*** COMM 870: Seminar in Mass Communication Theory ***OR*** COMM 871: Seminar in Human Communication Theory.
3. A maximum of 6 hours of 500 and 600 level courses may be taken for graduate credit.
4. Students may take as many as 6 hours of graduate courses outside the Communication Department with their advisor's approval.
5. A total of 6 credit hours in Topics and/or Readings may count towards the degree.
6. Students are advised to consult the current university catalog regarding dates and deadlines related to graduate work.

## Candidacy

Students are admitted to candidacy only after review and approval of their academic status by their graduate advisor. Students are usually admitted to candidacy when they have successfully completed the following:

1. At least 9 hours and not more than 12 hours of graduate study with a 3.0 average.
2. Removed all deficiencies.
3. Selected a master's program option.
4. Planned the remainder of their programs with their advisors.
5. International students must have a TOEFL score of 79 or a Duolingo score of 100 in each of the four areas of Literacy, Comprehension, Conversation and Production.

## **The Process**

1. The Pittsburg State Graduate School notifies students and advisors that candidacy plans should be completed online.
2. Student and advisor complete the final candidacy plan.
3. The plan is approved by the Communication Department Chair and Graduate School and filed as the official degree program.

## **Thesis Option**

Required graduate GPA after 24 hours of graduate courses: 3.5

Minimum number of credit hours for degree: 30

Required courses to complete the degree:

- COMM 815 Introduction to Graduate Studies
- COMM 870: Seminar in Mass Communication **or** COMM 871: Seminar in Human Communication Theory
- One additional 800 level graduate seminar
- COMM 890 Research and Thesis (1-6 hours)

### **The Master's Thesis Project:**

A master's thesis is an in-depth and original research project conducted during the course of the student's graduate studies. Students generally conduct this research over the course of one or two semesters under the guidance of a faculty advisor. A thesis must be successfully defended before a faculty committee consisting of two faculty members from the Communication Department and one member from another academic department.

## **Applied Research Option**

Required graduate GPA after 24 hours of graduate courses: 3.25

Minimum number of credit hours for degree: 32

Required courses to complete the degree:

- COMM 815 Introduction to Graduate Studies
- COMM 870: Seminar in Mass Communication **or** COMM 871: Seminar in Human Communication Theory
- One additional 800 level graduate seminar
- COMM 890 Research Problem (1-6 hours)

### **Applied Research**

The student will complete research related to a specific problem or will complete a specific advanced project. This option includes creative and aesthetic efforts such as performances, exhibits, or creative writing. The applied research option requires a minimum of 32 hours of coursework with no fewer than 15 semester hours in courses numbered 800-899 and at least 26 hours in courses numbered 700-899. Enrollment in 3 to 6 hours of Research Problem, Methods of Research or Research Seminar course work is required. A final presentation of the work must be given to a committee consisting of three faculty members from the Communication Department.

### **Coursework Option**

Required GPA after 24 hours of graduate courses: 3.0

Minimum number of credit hours for degree: 32

Required courses to complete the degree:

- COMM 815 Introduction to Graduate Studies
- COMM 870: Seminar in Mass Communication **or** COMM 871: Seminar in Human Communication Theory
- One additional 800 level graduate seminar
- COMM 840 Graduate Colloquium (1 hr.)

## **Comprehensive Exam**

Students will complete a 4-hour in-person comprehensive exam covering 800-level seminar coursework in segmented 1-hour question formats. If necessary 700-level coursework may be considered. Once enrolled in COMM 840 graduate students will work with their graduate advisors to identify coursework eligible for inclusion in the comprehensive exam.

## **The Seminar Paper Presentation**

A paper from one of the two research seminars is revised and presented to a colloquium of graduate students and a committee consisting of three faculty members from the Communication Department.