

# **Master of Arts Online Program in Communication**

## **2019–2020 STUDENT HANDBOOK**

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The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
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<https://asuonline.asu.edu/online-degree-programs/graduate/communication-ma>  
<https://humancommunication.clas.asu.edu/programs/ma/communication-ma>



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## Introduction

Welcome to the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication's Master of Arts Degree Program in Communication!

Now, more than ever, career professionals benefit from understanding how to communicate effectively across contexts and channels. To a great extent professional and personal success depend on the ability to connect with others and adapt one's interaction style to diverse audiences.

This handbook is designed to provide you with essential information that you need to thrive in our program. It sets shared expectations of ourselves as a community of learners. It also outlines the standards and policies set by the Hugh Downs School, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and ASU's Graduate College. Please read these materials carefully and ask questions if policies are unclear to you.

I look forward to working with you to achieve your goals in the Hugh Downs School.

Sincerely,

Janet K. (Jess) Alberts, Ph.D.  
President's Professor  
Director of the MA Program in Communication

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## Program Overview

Are you interested in becoming a leader in your profession, changing careers to one that you will find more fulfilling, or creating more successful teams at work? In the online master's program at the Hugh Downs School, you will develop skills that allow you to manage the modern-day challenges of communication in the workplace.

Program curriculum consists of 30 credits (10 courses) comprised of a set of core requirements, a variety of electives, and a culminating capstone project. Coursework is designed to combine theories about how communication functions with the application of these ideas in practice. In your courses, you will learn to:

- manage conflict more effectively
- influence others successfully
- communicate across global contexts
- respond to crises and disruptions in the workplace
- adapt communication for diverse audiences
- explain communication processes
- understand workplace dynamics
- present ideas and proposals clearly

All courses (with the exception of some summer classes) are offered in an intensive seven-and-a-half (7.5) week format. The program can be completed in as little as 18 months.

Graduates of the online MA in Communication are prepared for careers in corporate management, communication consulting, human resources management, marketing, communication education, public relations, sales management and similar professions.

## Admission

Applications will be considered for Fall, Spring, and Summer admission. Applicants must fulfill the requirements of the Graduate College, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication.

### Admissions Application Requirements

- Earned a bachelor's degree or higher from a regionally accredited institution in the U.S or the equivalent of a U.S. bachelor's degree from an international institution that is officially recognized by that country
- Must have maintained a "B" (3.00 on a 4.00 scale) grade point average (GPA) in the last 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours of undergraduate coursework
- Proof of English proficiency – International students only. If you are from a country whose native language is not English (regardless of where you may now reside), you must provide proof of English proficiency. For more information including additional requirements for international students, please visit [the ASU Graduate Admissions website](#).

**Items Needed to Apply to the Program:**

- Items that will be uploaded into the online application:
  - Personal Statement: ASU's MA in Communication provides students with a broad-based grounding in the theory and practice of effective communication and prepares students for success in the workplace. With this in mind, please describe your personal interest in the study of communication, the goals you wish to achieve while in the program, and your short and long-term career aspirations once you earn your degree. Personal statements should be approximately 500 words (2 pages, double spaced) and prepared in an MS Word (.doc), Rich Text (.rtf), or Portable Document Format (.pdf).
  - Resume that includes relevant personal, professional, educational, and community activities (one – two pages). The resume should be prepared in an MS Word (.doc), Rich Text (.rtf), or Portable Document Format (.pdf).
- Items that need to be mailed to Graduate Admissions Services:
  - Official transcripts from every college and university from which you have earned a Bachelor's degree or higher. Transcripts must show the completion of your undergraduate degree as well as your final Grade Point Average. These must be sent to Graduate Admission Services directly from the institutions you attended.
  - [Proof of English proficiency](#) – International students only.

**How to Complete and Submit the Graduate College Admission Online Application:**

- Review the application deadlines prior to applying:  
<https://humancommunication.clas.asu.edu/admission/graduate-admission>
- Start the online application at this website: <https://students.asu.edu/graduate/apply-graduate-admission>
- Select the appropriate term for planned semester and year of enrollment
- Upload required items listed above and request official transcripts
- Submit the application and pay the appropriate application fee

Students who are not accepted into the MA in Communication degree program may, if accepted by Graduate Admission Services as Non-degree graduate students, take up to 3 elective courses and then request to be reconsidered for admission (submission of new application and fee will be required).

**Program Requirements**

The MA in Communication is a 30 credit hour program consisting of required core courses, a selection of electives, and a capstone project. Students typically take one or two courses per session, and students are allowed to enroll in no more than 12 hours (4 classes) per semester (each semester includes a Session A and a Session B).

Required Core (COM 501, COM 504, and COM 540*):	9 credits
Choose 18 credits of COM 598:	18 credits
Culminating Experience (COM 550 Capstone):	3 credits
	30 credits

Students need to maintain a 3.0 overall grade point average during their MA course of study and must earn a B or higher grade in each of the core classes (501, 504, 540, and 550). A maximum of two incompletes at the end of the second semester is allowed. No grades lower than a C may appear on a master's student's Plan of Study. If students fail to adhere to these requirements, they will be put on academic probation and may be terminated from the program. There is a formal [process](#) for any student wishing to appeal a grade.

Current courses offered include:

### **Required Core (9 credit hours)**

All students must take the following **core** courses:

COM 501 Research Methods in Communication (3 credits)  
 COM 504 Theories and Models in Communication (3 credits)  
 COM 540 Conducting Communication Research (3 credits)\*

\*Students can enroll in COM 540 upon completion of COM 501, COM 504 and at least four COM 598 completions.

### **Elective Courses (18 credit hours) - Select 6 courses (additional topics may be added later)**

In addition to the required core coursework, students must choose 18 credits of COM 598 Special Topic coursework.

COM 598: Communication and Conflict Transformation (3 credits)  
 COM 598: Communication and Gender (3 credits)  
 COM 598: Communication in Global Contexts (3 credits)  
 COM 598: Communication in the Workplace (3 credits)  
 COM 598: Crisis Management and Communication (3 credits)  
 COM 508: Quantitative Research Methods in Communication (3 credits)  
 COM 598: Social Influence and Persuasion (3 credits)  
 COM 598: Negotiation Theory and Practice (3 credits)  
 COM 598: Training and Development (3 credits)

### **Required Culminating Experience (3 credit hours)**

COM 550 Capstone (3 credits)

This 3-credit course serves as the culminating experience of the online Master of Arts in Communication. The capstone class involves developing a project that answers a question or solves a problem tailored to their interests, needs, and goals. Students will be assigned a faculty mentor for their projects.

This individualized applied project allows students to blend course content with their specific areas of interest to create a product that facilitates career development. The course is organized around students' interests and engagement with graduate level communication material, ideas, themes, theories and questions. Readings and other materials are designed to assist students in completing their specific capstone projects.

For capstone projects, students might design a training program, evaluate an existing training or communication program, create, conduct and write a report of a facilitated workshop, create and

present a performance, analyze a health campaign, conduct a small research project, or similar applied research activities. Projects should build on core ideas addressed in the Master of Arts in Communication program and demonstrate core analytic and research skills. Each week students will be required to complete all readings, writing assignments, discussion board posts, and responses to classmates' discussion board posts. Every project will include a detailed paper product as well.

### **Plan of Study**

The program is 30 credits. All classes must be taken at Arizona State University and no transfer credits or substitutions will be considered. Students must have their Interactive Plan of Study approved before completion of 50% of their required coursework. The iPOS is submitted online via MyASU. Students must list Dr. Janet Alberts (Program Director) as the Committee Chair and Patrick McDonald (Program Advisor) as the Committee Member when submitting the iPOS.

## **ASU and Graduate College Policies**

Being a part of ASU means that all students, regardless of program, are held to the same high standards of academic integrity and excellence. The failure of any graduate student to uphold these standards may result in serious consequences including suspension or expulsion from the university and/or other sanctions as specified in the academic integrity policies of individual colleges as well as the university.

While some aspects of your academic training are controlled by the MA program itself (and the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication more generally), other aspects, such as program time limits, are controlled by the university. These policies are outlined at the website below. It is important that all students familiarize themselves with these [graduate policies and procedures](#). Each student should also communicate directly with his/her academic unit to be clear on its expectations for degree completion.

### **Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy**

*Note: The MA Program follows Graduate College Academic Progress Policy. The current policy can be found at [https://graduate.asu.edu/sites/default/files/asu-graduate-policies-and-procedures\\_032019.pdf](https://graduate.asu.edu/sites/default/files/asu-graduate-policies-and-procedures_032019.pdf).*

Below is the policy put into effect on March, 2019, Graduate College– Satisfactory Academic Progress.

All graduate students are expected to make systematic progress toward completion of their graduate program. This progress includes satisfying the conditions listed below, and achieving the benchmarks and requirements set by the individual graduate programs as well as the Graduate College. If a student fails to satisfy the requirements of their program and/or the benchmarks outlined below, the student may be dismissed from their program based on the academic unit's recommendation to the Graduate College at which time the Dean of the Graduate College makes the final determination. Satisfactory academic progress includes:

1. Maintain a minimum 3.00 for all GPAs.
2. Satisfy all requirements of the graduate program.

3. Satisfy the maximum time limit for graduation for the student's graduate program (six years for masters and certificates, ten years for doctoral), see "Time Limit" sections.
4. Successfully pass comprehensive exams, qualifying exams, foreign language exams, and the oral defense of the proposal/prospectus for the thesis or dissertation.
5. Successfully complete the culminating experience.
6. Graduate students must remain continuously enrolled in their graduate program. Failing to do so without a Graduate College approved Leave of Absence is considered to be lack of academic progress and may result in the Graduate College withdrawing the student from their program.

### **Registration and Continuous Enrollment**

Once admitted to the program, students must be registered for a minimum of one graduate-level credit hour during all phases of their graduate education, including the term in which they graduate. Registration every fall semester and spring semester is required. Summer registration is required for students graduating from the degree program in the summer.

Graduate students register through MyASU at the time they are assigned an enrollment appointment. Details regarding registration and course drop/add procedures are provided in the [Registration and Tuition Payment Guide](#).

### *Leaves of Absence*

Graduate students planning to discontinue registration for a semester or more must submit a Leave of Absence request via their Interactive Plan of Student (iPOS). A copy of the Leave of Absence form can be located at <https://graduate.asu.edu/current-students/policies-forms-and-deadlines/student-forms-and-petitions>. This request must be submitted and approved before the anticipated semester of non-registration. Students may request a maximum of two semesters of leave during their entire program.

Having an approved Leave of Absence by the Graduate College will enable students to reenter their program without re-applying to the university. Students who do not register for a fall or spring semester without an approved Leave of Absence are considered withdrawn from the university under the assumption that they have decided to discontinue their program. Students removed for this reason may reapply for admission to resume their degree program; the application will be considered along with all other new applications to the degree program.

Students with a Graduate College approved Leave of Absence are not required to pay tuition and/or fees, but in turn are not permitted to place any demands on university faculty or use any university resources. These resources include university libraries, laboratories, recreation facilities or faculty and staff time.

There are sometimes circumstances when students may need to withdraw from the university (i.e. medical withdrawal, compassionate leave). The [policies](#) for such withdrawals are the same for both undergraduate and graduate students.

**Graduation**

Students must apply for graduation through MyASU in accordance with the University Registrar policies. See Application for Graduation at <https://students.asu.edu/registration/graduation-apply>. Students must meet all University and Graduate College degree requirements prior to the conferral of their degree or awarding of their certificate. For more information on the graduation process, see <https://graduation.asu.edu/onlinegrads>. The most current pdf version of the ASU Graduate Policies and Procedures can be found at: [https://graduate.asu.edu/sites/default/files/asu-graduate-policies-and-procedures\\_032019\\_0.pdf](https://graduate.asu.edu/sites/default/files/asu-graduate-policies-and-procedures_032019_0.pdf)

Graduation deadlines and procedures are set by the Graduate College and are available online at <https://graduate.asu.edu/current-students/policies-forms-and-deadlines/graduation-deadlines>. Deadline dates vary slightly depending on the calendar year, so students should check them carefully in advance of the semester they plan to defend their thesis/dissertation. It is important students become familiar with the deadlines so graduation can occur during the expected term.

**Student Code of Conduct**

The Student Code of Conduct sets forth the standards of conduct expected of students who choose to join the university community. Students who violate these standards will be subject to disciplinary sanctions in order to promote their own personal development, to protect the university community, and to maintain order and stability on campus. All Students are expected to adhere to the [ABOR Student Code of Conduct](#).

**Academic Integrity**

All graduate students are subject to University standards of academic honesty, integrity, and professionalism in their relations with graduate student peers and faculty. All students must adhere to the [university academic integrity policy](#). Students who violate University standards of academic honesty, integrity, and professionalism are liable to academic probation or termination from the program.

## Student Resources/Helpful Links

**Disability Resources**

[ASU Disability Resource Center](#)

**Financial Resources**

[Financial Aid and Scholarship Services](#)

[Tuition and Fees](#)

**Health/Counseling Services**

[ASU Health Services](#)

[ASU Counseling Services](#)

**Resources for International Students**

[International Students and Scholars Center](#)

[ASU International Students](#)

**Resources for Veterans and Military**

[Pat Tillman Veterans Center](#)

**Student Rights and Responsibilities**

[Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)

[Office of Equity and Inclusion](#)

[Title IX](#)

## Contact Information

Success Coach Name: Stephen Lay  
Success Coach Email: [Stephen.C.Lay@asu.edu](mailto:Stephen.C.Lay@asu.edu)  
Success Coach Phone: (602) 903-1940

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Graduate Advisor Name: Patrick McDonald  
Graduate Advisor Email: [pgmcdona@asu.edu](mailto:pgmcdona@asu.edu)  
Graduate Advisor Phone: (480) 799-5000

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Director of MA Program Name: Dr. Janet Alberts  
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Director of MA Program Phone: (480) 965-5095