

# COMMUNICATION ARTS, PHD

## 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	This program does not admit in the spring.
Summer Deadline	This program does not admit in the summer.
GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)	Not required but may be considered if available.
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: <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241</a> ( <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241/">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241/</a> ).
Other Test(s) (e.g., GMAT, MCAT)	n/a
Letters of Recommendation Required	3

Since COVID-19, there have been challenges for students attempting to take the GRE. For students applying in Fall 2025 (for Fall 2026 admission), the GRE requirement is optional. Regardless of whether GRE scores are submitted, all applications will be held in equal regard.

Applicants must have earned a master's degree from an accredited institution. The Graduate School minimum GPA is 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. The department likes to see at least a 3.25 in courses relevant to the area in which you apply, although successful applicants usually have much higher GPAs.

Within the department, **applicants may apply to only one pathway of study, which must be indicated on the statement of purpose:**

- Communication Science;
- Film;

- Media and Cultural Studies; or
- Rhetoric, Politics, and Culture.

### APPLICATION MATERIALS

There are six supporting documents which complete the application:

1. **Statement of purpose** clearly telling us what you want to study and why you think you can do it here. Although it cannot be said to be the most important part of your application, the statement of purpose is our introduction to you as a student and as such, you will want it to be as professional and persuasive as possible to put your application in the best light.
2. **A supplemental question** asking about how your background and life experiences have motivated your decision to pursue a graduate degree here.
3. **Three letters of recommendation**, preferably from academic sources. Email addresses of recommenders are submitted within the online application.
4. **Submission of GRE scores is currently optional. Students who elect to submit official GRE scores should do so through ETS.** UW-Madison is institution #1846; no department code is necessary.
5. **PDFs of unofficial transcripts** from all post-secondary schools attended after high school. Official transcripts will be requested upon admission.
6. **A writing sample** (in English), 8–25 pages long. The best writing sample is an academic paper you wrote for a class related to the area in which you apply. It should have citations and footnotes. If you submit a paper from graduate coursework, it should be 15 to 25 pages in length. If you submit a paper from undergraduate coursework, it should be 8 to 12 pages. If you have a relevant published paper or article, you may submit that instead of a course paper. Include a cover page identifying it as a chapter or section of a longer work.

### INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS

International degree-seeking applicants must prove English proficiency using the Graduate School's requirements (<https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/>).