

JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION: PROFESSIONAL, MA

This is a named option in the Journalism and Mass Communication MA (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/journalism-mass-communication/journalism-mass-communication-ma/>).

The Professional MA program prepares students for careers in news and information production. The program provides a mix of practical communication skills, conceptual knowledge of journalism and mass communication, and an area of specialization.

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	April 15
Summer Deadline	The program does not admit in the summer.
GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)	Not required.
English Proficiency Test	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

New students are admitted to the School of Journalism and Mass Communication for the fall semester. A committee of faculty members reviews each application. Among the indicators considered for admission are:

- Quality of an applicant's academic record
- Preparation to pursue an advanced degree
- Clearly defined goals and rationale for graduate education in the field

Applicants must submit the following to the online application:

1. Statement of Purpose (750 words maximum) regarding your educational and career goals and your reasons for selecting this graduate program. Discuss those factors – personal, professional, academic – that have prepared you to pursue a graduate degree. All Professional MA applicants should indicate in some detail what kind of specialty they will seek and why.
2. Supplemental application questions:
 - a. How have your background and life experiences, including cultural, geographical, financial, educational, or other opportunities or challenges motivated your decision to pursue a graduate degree at the University of Wisconsin?
3. Unofficial transcripts of prior undergraduate and graduate course completion.
4. Resume.
5. Writing sample in PDF format (25 page maximum). No CDs, DVDs or other material will be accepted or considered. Writing samples could include news stories, blog posts, white papers, reports or portions of an academic paper. Professionally published samples are preferred but not required. Writing samples must be uploaded to the Supplemental Section of the online application.
6. Three letters of recommendation, coming primarily from faculty members who can evaluate your previous academic performance and provide an assessment of your likelihood of success in graduate school. One of the letters may come from an employer or internship supervisor. Letters should come from individuals who have worked directly with you and who are in a position to objectively evaluate your abilities and work productivity.

FUNDING

FUNDING GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

[The Bursar's Office provides information about tuition and fees associated with being a graduate student. Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information is available from the Graduate School.](#)

Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

All applicants who are admitted for graduate studies are automatically considered for scholarship support. No separate application is required.

Our professional master's program does not provide funding guarantees through graduate assistantships, but students may apply for Teaching Assistantships in the department for their second year of the program. This application is open during the Spring semester for students already matriculated in the program.

<https://journalism.wisc.edu/graduate/financial-aid/>

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum degree requirements (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#requirementstext>) and policies (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiestext>), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

NAMED OPTION 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

Requirements	Detail
Minimum Credit Requirement	30 credits
Minimum Residence Credit Requirement	16 credits
Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement	15 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	3.25 GPA required for degree conferral. For academic probation and other grading policies, refer to the Graduate School: Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirement policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/).
Other Grade Requirements	Students must earn a B or above in all curriculum coursework.
Assessments and Examinations	Students present a portfolio of their work in the last semester.

Language Requirements No language requirements.

REQUIRED COURSES

Code	Title	Credits
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Skills Courses

Students must complete the following course:		
JOURN 335	Principles and Practices of Reporting	4

Additional Skills Courses

Complete at least 8 additional credits from the following skills courses chosen in consultation with the program advisor:		8
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JOURN 401	In-Depth Reporting	
JOURN 405	Creative Nonfiction	
JOURN 411	Multimedia Design	
JOURN 415	Science and Environmental Journalism	
JOURN 417	Magazine Publishing	
JOURN 420	Investigative Reporting	
JOURN 425	Video Journalism	
JOURN 426	Community-Based Reporting	
JOURN 450	Sports Reporting and Writing	
JOURN 456	Long Form Video	
JOURN 457	Storytelling Through Sound	
JOURN 475	Special Topics in Advanced Concepts and Skills	

Concept Courses

Students must complete the following course:		
JOURN 903	Professional Master's Colloquium	1

Additional Concept Courses

Complete at least 6 other credits from the following concept course list in consultation with the program advisor:		6
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JOURN/ HISTORY 560	History of U.S. Media	
JOURN 561	Mass Communication and Society	
JOURN 563	Law of Mass Communication	
JOURN 564	Media and the Consumer	
JOURN 565	Effects of Mass Communication	
JOURN 566	Communication and Public Opinion	
JOURN 567	Mass Media and Global Communication	
JOURN/ COM ARTS/ HDFS 616	Mass Media and Youth	
JOURN/ COM ARTS/ LSC 617	Health Communication in the Information Age	
JOURN 618	Mass Communication and Political Behavior	
JOURN 620	International Communication	
JOURN 622	The Impact of Emerging Media	

JOURN/ ART HIST/ HISTORY/ L I S 650	History of Books and Print Culture in Europe and North America
JOURN 651	Communicating Sports Controversies
JOURN 658	Communication Research Methods
JOURN/ ASIAN AM 662	Mass Media and Minorities
JOURN 664	Social Networks in Communication
JOURN 669	Literary Aspects of Journalism
JOURN 675	Topics in Government and Mass Media
JOURN 676	Special Topics in Mass Communication
JOURN/L I S 677	Concepts and Tools for Data Analysis and Visualization
JOURN 678	Legal & Ethical Dimensions of Emerging Media
JOURN 801	Mass Communication and the Individual
JOURN 802	Mass Communication and Society
JOURN 803	Mass Communication and Culture
JOURN/ HISTORY 808	Mass Communication History
JOURN 821	Health Communication
JOURN 822	Global Communication
JOURN/ ENVIR ST/ LSC 823	Science and Environment Communication
JOURN 824	Race, Ethnicity and Media
JOURN/LSC 825	Law and Ethics of Communication and Media
JOURN/LSC 826	Journalism Theory
JOURN/ GEN&WS 828	Gender and Sexuality in Mass Communication
JOURN/ POLI SCI 829	Political Communication
JOURN/LSC 833	Technology and Society
JOURN 835	News Framing and Social Protest Movements
JOURN 880	Topics in Mass Communication

Specialization Courses (outside of Journalism & Mass Communication)

In addition to the courses listed above, students must complete at least 6 credits of coursework outside the School of Journalism and Mass Communication numbered 300 or above. 6

Additional Coursework

To satisfy the minimum credit requirement, students complete any elective credits (within or outside department) chosen in consultation with program. 5

Total Credits 30

POLICIES

GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (<https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>) serve as the official document of record for Graduate School academic and administrative policies and procedures and are updated continuously. Note some policies redirect to entries in the official UW-Madison Policy Library (<https://policy.wisc.edu/>). Programs may set more stringent policies than the Graduate School. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

NAMED OPTION-SPECIFIC POLICIES

PRIOR COURSEWORK

Graduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

Undergraduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions or UW-Madison

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

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

Refer to 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

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

PROBATION

Refer to the Graduate School: Probation (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1217/>) policy.

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

Refer to the Graduate School: Advisor (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1232/>) policy.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credit maximum. Refer to the Graduate School: Maximum Credit Loads and Overload Requests (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1228/>) policy.

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/>)
- 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://employeeedisabilities.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 Student Assistance and Support (OSAS) (<https://osas.wisc.edu/>) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
- 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)

L&S POLICY FOR GRADUATE STUDENT ACADEMIC APPEALS

Graduate students have the right to appeal an academic decision related to an L&S graduate program if the student believes that the decision is inconsistent with published policy.

Academic decisions that may be appealed include:

- Dismissal from the graduate program
- Failure to pass a qualifying or preliminary examination
- Failure to achieve satisfactory academic progress
- Academic disciplinary action related to failure to meet professional conduct standards

Issues such as the following cannot be appealed using this process:

- A faculty member declining to serve as a graduate student's advisor.
- Decisions regarding the student's disciplinary knowledge, evaluation of the quality of work, or similar judgements. These are the domain of the department faculty.
- Course grades. These can be appealed instead using the L&S Policy for Grade Appeal (<https://kb.wisc.edu/lis/22258/>).
- Incidents of bias or hate, hostile and intimidating behavior (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>), or discrimination (Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>), Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/eo-complaint/formal-investigations/>)). Direct these to the linked campus offices appropriate for the incident(s).

Appeal Process for Graduate Students

A graduate student wishing to appeal an academic decision must follow the process in the order listed below. Note time limits within each step.

1. The student should first seek informal resolution, if possible, by discussing the concern with their academic advisor, the department's Director of Graduate Studies, and/or the department chair.
2. If the program has an appeal policy listed in their graduate program handbook, the student should follow the policy as written, including adhering to any indicated deadlines. In the absence of a specific departmental process, the chair or designee will be the reviewer and decision maker, and the student should submit a written appeal to the chair within 15 business days of the academic decision. The chair or designee will notify the student in writing of their decision.
3. If the departmental process upholds the original decision, the graduate student may next initiate an appeal to L&S. To do so, the student must submit a written appeal to the L&S Assistant Dean for Graduate Student Academic Affairs within 15 business days of notification of the department's decision.
 - a. To the fullest extent possible, the written appeal should include, in a single document: a clear and concise statement of the academic decision being appealed, any relevant background on what led to the decision, the specific policies involved, the relief sought, any relevant documentation related to the departmental appeal, and the names and titles of any individuals contributing to or involved in the decision.
 - b. The Assistant Dean will work with the Academic Associate Dean of the appropriate division to consider the appeal. They may seek additional information and/or meetings related to the case.
 - c. The Assistant Dean and Academic Associate Dean will provide a written decision within 20 business days.
4. If L&S upholds the original decision, the graduate student may appeal to the Graduate School. More information can be found on their website: Grievances and Appeals (<https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/grievances-and-appeals/>) (see: Graduate School Appeal Process).

OTHER

n/a

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 INFORMATION

We offer a career colloquium for all professional MA students and require students to complete an internship during their time in the program. Students receive professional coaching in classes and work with our career advisor who provides support for job and internship search and preparation.