



IUP Graduate Handbook

Master of Science in Strategic Communication

Department of Communications Media

Handbook Updated 2020-2021

Master of Science in Strategic Communication
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Department of Communications Media
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Program Website: <https://www.iup.edu/commmedia/grad/strategic-communication-ms/>

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Affirmative Action

Indiana University of Pennsylvania is committed to provide leadership in taking affirmative action to assure equal education and employment rights for all persons without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, disability, or veterans' status. We believe that respect for the individual in the academic community must not be

Title IX Coordinator. The only exceptions to the faculty member's reporting obligation are when incidents of sexual violence are communicated by a student during a classroom discussion, in a writing assignment for a class, or as part of a university-approved research project.

Faculty members are obligated to report sexual violence or any other abuse of a student who was, or is, a child (a person under 18 years of age) when the abuse allegedly occurred to the Department of Human Services, at 1-800-932-0313, and University Police, at 724-357-2141.

Information regarding the reporting of sexual violence and the resources that are available to victims of sexual violence is set forth at: www.iup.edu/social-equity/policies/title-ix

Specific inquiries regarding Title IX should be directed to:

Social Equity and Title IX Office
Delaney Hall, Suite B17
920 Grant Street
Indiana, PA 15705
Telephone: 724-357-3402

The university publishes an online student handbook, The Source: A Student Policy Guide, which is a companion to this catalog. The handbook contains detailed information on the policies mentioned on this page. It is accessible to all enrolled students at: www.iup.edu/studentconduct/thesource.

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The Office of Student Conduct can be reached at 724-357-1264, and is located in Suite G-11 Ruddock Hall.

The following information is considered directory in

Faculty and Staff

Financial Assistance

Graduate Assistantships

Students may apply for a part-time (10-hour) or full-time (20-hour) graduate assistantship. Students should indicate their interest in a graduate assistantship position by checking the box in the program application and by contacting the program coordinator. Information about graduate assistantships may be found at: www.iup.edu/admissions/graduate/financialaid/assistantships-and-scholarships/

- o Office of Financial Aid: www.iup.edu/financialaid/

Academic Advisement

The program coordinator serves as the academic advisor for students enrolled in the M.S. in Strategic Communication. The advisor will provide guidance on courses that should be taken each semester, according to students' full-time or part-time status. Students should take an active role in the advisement relationship through communication with the advisor, timely registration for classes, and responsiveness in submitting required documents and other information as needed.

Campus Resources & Student Support

The School of Graduate Studies and Research: www.iup.edu/graduatestudies/

Graduate Catalog: www.iup.edu/gradcatalog

Office of the Bursar: www.iup.edu/bursar/

Office of the Registrar: www.iup.edu/registrar/

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Graduate Student Assembly

The Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) represents the graduate student body's interests at IUP and within the Indiana community. The GSA makes recommendations related University-wide and graduate-specific policies and in areas of concern in the cultural, intellectual, and social life of the part- and full-time graduate student. Visit www.iup.edu/graduatestudies/gsa for more information.

Programs and Degrees

Master of Science in Strategic Communication

The Master of Science in Strategic Communication offers students the opportunity to select one of two tracks, applied or research.

Individuals who are focused on career advancement or pursuit of careers in the communications industry are most likely to select the applied track. This track requires students to take COMM 793 Internship. The internship is offered only during the summer sessions and is a six-credit experience.

Individuals who are seeking advanced graduate study after the Master's program are mostly likely to select the research track. This track requires students to take COMM 795 Thesis (six-credits).

Both tracks require the student to take COMM 715 - Research and Professional Development in Strategic Communication.

Student Learning Outcomes

The curriculum design incorporates required and elective courses that position students to successfully obtain the following Student Learning Outcomes:

At the conclusion of the program, students will be able to:

- Analyze organizational communication needs
- Develop effective, goal-driven communication messages
- Understand audience behaviors to match messages with audience motivations
- Integrate written and verbal messages with digital media production
- Construct strategic messages, utilizing critical thinking and argumentation
- Deliver communication campaigns in writing, in person and online

At the conclusion of the program, students who pursue the applied track will be able to:

- Implement communications strategies, including planning, writing and evaluation in various industries (corporate, health, education, non-profit)
- Apply learning in strategic communication in an experiential education activity

At the conclusion of the program, students who pursue the research track will be able to:

- Perform research and analyze data
- Apply learning in strategic communication in a culminating thesis research project

Curriculum Outline

It is possible for full time students to complete the MS in Strategic Communication in 12 months if they begin in the fall semester. Fall and spring semester registration for full time students is four courses (12 credits). To complete the program in 12-14 months, students would take additional elective courses in summer or winter term. Students must complete all 36 programs credits, including either the internship

We frequently offer dual listed electives that will include enrollment of students in our undergraduate Bachelor of Science in Communications Media or our CMIT Ph.D. program. Requirements for advanced students in dual-listed courses may be different from other students in lower level programs. Students may take elective courses in other departments at IUP with permission of the coordinator of the MS in Strategic Communication and representatives from the other department. Undergraduate courses that are not dual-listed at least at the 500-level, do not count toward the completion of your Master's degree.

Course Descriptions

COMM 511 Theories and Principles of Strategic Communication

Provides students a solid foundation of the study of strategic communication with emphasis on organizational communication theories, strategic storytelling, participatory media, and online media's impact on behaviors and attitudes. Students will learn key elements of the field, analyze and evaluate messages for their strategic communication effectiveness and create and present examples of Strategic Communication in written and oral presentations. This course will provide an overview of discipline specific applications of strategic communication.

COMM 512 Writing for Strategic Communication

Course Description: Prepares students to write goal-driven messages aimed at promoting action across a wide variety of media platforms. Students evaluate and write strategic communications documents for communication platforms including in-person, online and on-air.

COMM 513 Multimedia Development and Production

Focuses on the planning, development, and production of multimedia for strategic communication. Particular focus is placed on both the function and promotion of interactions between developer and the target audience with the goal of creating media that both provide content and motivate and equip audiences to respond with user-generated content.

COMM 611 The Strategic Communicator

Prepares students to become strategic communicators. Students will learn about interpersonal communication, group dynamics, problem-solving, and conflict resolution to become effective strategic communicators in the field. Course content will help students identify challenges, develop solutions and use appropriate presentation techniques to solve organizational problems.

COMM 612 Persuasion

Introduces students to the theories and practices involved in understanding the creation of persuasive messages, or messages intended to influence people's attitudes, behaviors, and opinions through all forms of media and interpersonal discussion. This course will look at how people process persuasive messages and the subsequent effects of these messages. This course will explore theories of persuasion, attitude change, and message design that can be used for message creation.

COMM 613 Strategic Communication and Online Campaigns

Prerequisite: COMM 513

Exposes students to the current and evolving terminology for online distribution of media campaigns. The course will require students to study successful and unsuccessful campaigns of the past. Students will then plan

and develop a media campaign that is strategically targeted to a narrow audience and delivered and promoted via online media.

COMM 712 Global Strategic Communication

Exposes students to the complexities of strategic communication for global organizations, with an emphasis on leadership and management of communication. Students will be engaged in research, discussion and writing to gain an understanding of how organizations develop information for a multicultural and global audience, both internal and external. Includes analysis of ethical, legal, political and social communication issues around the globe. Skills and practices learned in this course will be transferable to multiple contexts of globally-oriented communication.

COMM 713 Advanced Strategic Communication Writing and Production

Prerequisites: COMM 512, 513

Prepares students to write and produce strategic messages at the professional level and to meet the needs of employers in internships and careers. Using theory, research, writing and production concepts from previous coursework, students will be engaged in the purposeful creation of strategic communication products that meet the needs of organizations and audiences. This advanced, project-driven, course provides a culminating experience for students in the applied track of the Master of Science in Strategic Communication.

COMM 715: Research Development in Strategic Communication

Provides a broad overview of the diverse perspectives and approaches to strategic communication. Using theory, research, writing, and production concepts from previous coursework, students will be engaged in the purposeful creation of strategic communication products or a research project that reflects the goals of the MS in Strategic Communication program. This project-driven course provides a capstone course experience for students in the Master of Science in Strategic Communication.

COMM 720 Political Communication

Provide students with a survey of communications role in politics and the political process. An interdisciplinary exploration of the field will explore the role of communication in and through legislative processes and outcomes, political campaigns and debate, news media, civic engagement, public opinion, political discourse and political identity construction.

COMM 745 Health Communication

Explores the role of communication campaigns in the area of public health. Students will develop the skills necessary to use media strategically to advance persuasive health messages through design, production and dissemination. Applies communication theory to the promotion of health messages.

COMM 793 Internship

Prerequisites: COMM 715, departmental approval

Course Description: Provides for a summer experiential education experience in a professional setting. This faculty-supervised experience may include placement at approved academic, business, non-profit, governmental or other organizations in a department or area related to the goals of the MS in Strategic Communication. Students will complete 240 work hours for this six credit culminating experience.

COMM 795 Thesis

Prerequisites: COMM 715, department approval

Requires students to design, develop and execute an original research study in an area related to strategic communication. The culmination of the research will be a written thesis.

Program Policies

Communication

IUP provides all students, free of charge, an e-mail account with the university email system. Students activate this account online through the university website; the Student Computing Help Desk also can provide assistance. It is required that students will activate and use this address for all communication with the Master's Program and the Department of Communications Media. Any announcements or the dissemination of necessary information will be made using students' university e-mail addresses. Students are responsible for checking their campus e-mail in order to keep abreast of important announcements, reminders, etc. Failure to do so may result in missing important information. The department will not make provisions to contact students at alternative email addresses.

Registering for classes

Each semester's Master's degree classes, including winter and summer courses, are open for registration by permission only. Students are not permitted to register until that have conferred with the Master's program coordinator to determine the appropriate classes for each semester. Students are assigned a unique four-digit "alternate PIN" by the IUP Scheduling Center. This PIN is required to access the registration system, to make the initial registration and any schedule changes to that same semester.

Following a consultation with the Master's coordinator, the student will be provided with the Course Record Number (CRN) for all courses for which they

incomplete grade is a decision made by the instructor of each course at his or her discretion, and students should not anticipate this as an option simply because they are unable to complete the course work on deadline due to time management issues. At least two-thirds (2/3) of the required course work must be completed for a student to be eligible to receive an incomplete grade designation.

In situations where an “I” grade is warranted, the student and the faculty member will outline the steps necessary to rectify the incomplete grade including appropriate deadlines. Change of Grade forms to convert designations of “I” must be received in the Office of the Registrar no later than the final day of classes in the next regular (fall/spring) semester after the designation was assigned. If the student does not complete the work in time for this grade change to be accomplished, the “I” will convert to an F.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is required for all students in the Master of Science in Strategic Communication program. Students are required to attend all class sessions in their entirety.

Acquire skills, knowledge and experience in strategic communication writing and production

The approval process of internship sites will be coordinated by a departmental internship supervisor. This approval process will include advising students to write goals and objectives for the internship experience that allows them to gain appropriate experience in writing and production of strategic communication messages.

Participate in advanced project planning and implementation

The internship site approval process will ascertain that students are situated in an internship site that permits them to be engaged in planning, discussion and implementation of strategic communication plans. Near the mid-term point of the internship, the faculty supervisor conducts an in-person site

internship coordinator and program coordinator will review all site offer forms and applications before approving the internship. Approval will only be given for sites where the student will work on-site in the field of strategic communication under the direct supervision of someone who has the skills and/or position the intern is seeking.

Students who are full-time or part-time employed in

Develop deeper knowledge of research methods in the field of strategic communication	Each student's research proposal will be unique to his or her professional, academic and research aspirations but must be consistent with the academic goals of the Master of Science in Strategic Communication.
Find, analyze, evaluate and select information from various sources	Through the research process, students will complete a literature review, identifying appropriate contemporary and seminal research that provides the background to their study. With guidance from the thesis chair and committee, students will evaluate these sources.

Apply research strategies from previous course work to design, implement and write original research

Thesis Completion

Thesis Committee Selection

Each student in the program is responsible for securing a thesis chair from the approved Master's faculty

members are expected to be actively involved in the thesis process, to respond to student questions in a timely fashion, and attend all thesis meetings as coordinated by the thesis chair.

Students in the thesis process are responsible for consistent and timely communication with their thesis committee, particularly the thesis chair. Once the committee has approved the RTAF, the student is expected to maintain contact at least twice a month, or more, until the final thesis is defended and approved. Students are required to submit drafts and respond to requests for revisions to documents by deadlines, as established by their thesis chair and thesis committee. All students, but particularly those students in the thesis process, should be aware of IUP's academic calendar and recognize that when classes are not in session, most faculty are not on campus and not available. Advance planning is necessary to meet related thesis deadlines and is the responsibility of the student. Students are expected to give faculty no less than two weeks to read and respond to thesis-related documents.

MS Strategic Communication students are advised to secure an editor to proofread and perform final edits on their thesis prior to submitting the draft to the School of Graduate Studies and Research. The role and responsibility of the thesis committee does not include thesis editing.

Evaluation Outcome for Thesis

Thesis Research Topic Approval Process: MS students in the Research Track will register for COMM 795 Thesis for six credits. During the term in which students are registered for COMM 715 Research Development in Strategic Communication, they will begin the process of outlining their thesis project and completing the Research Topic Approval Form (RTAF). This form is available on the School of Graduate Studies and Research (SGSR) web site. Students may submit the RTAF and defend their research proposal during the same semester they are enrolled in COMM 715, so long as the thesis committee has been approved.

The completed RTAF must include an indication of special resources, equipment or conditions needed for the research, an intended time frame, and a list of references. While taking COMM 715, students will receive guidance on the thesis process and work with their thesis chair and the instructor on their RTAF and research design. The defense of these documents will be presented, in person, to the thesis committee prior to the submission of the RTAF to the Master's Coordinator. All members of the thesis committee must be present in person for this meeting. The date and time of this meeting will be made available by the thesis chair to the other COMM faculty, who may attend the meeting. Visiting faculty are permitted to ask questions but are not part of any deliberation on the part of the committee and will be excused once deliberations begin.

The RTAF must be found satisfactory by all members of the committee, and an RTAF must be approved and signed by all members of the thesis committee before the candidate may proceed with the thesis research. The RTAF outlines this procedure and is available from the School of Graduate Studies and Research (SGSR). Once the committee has approved the RTAF, the student will forward the RTAF and related documents to the Master's Coordinator, College Dean, and the SGSR. Revisions to the research plan may be necessary, as requested by the SGSR, following the submission of the RTAF.

Following approval of the thesis proposal, but before data collection begins, the student must obtain permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (and other

review boards as appropriate) following the procedures established for the protection of human subjects. If the thesis is theoretical or data collection involves no human subjects, IRB approval may not be required, or may be expedited.

Approval of Thesis Prospectus - Chapters 1-3: The thesis committee will require students to submit and defend the first three chapters of their thesis before any data collection may begin. The student will meet with the committee, in person, to review the first three chapters of the thesis and obtain approval of the research methodology before beginning data collection. Students will submit the written draft of the three chapters to the thesis committee no later than two weeks before the scheduled defense meeting.

Thesis Oral Defense and Completion Process: The student will work closely with, and is expected to meet regularly with, the thesis chairperson and committee members to complete the thesis and all related components. The student will be required to defend the completed thesis, in person, during an oral defense. All members of the thesis committee must be present, in person, for this meeting. The defense of the thesis is open to the IUP faculty and MS Strategic Communication students as approved by the thesis chairperson. During the defense, the candidate is expected to respond to substantive and methodological questions related to the thesis. The decision regarding the outcome of the defense will be made by a two-thirds majority vote of the thesis committee members. The thesis must be approved, in writing, by each member of the committee.

The evaluation of the thesis can be pass, pass with revisions, or revise and repeat defense. Students whose thesis is passed with revisions will work with the committee to make the identified revisions and return the document to the committee for review as directed. Students whose thesis is evaluated as requiring revision and a repeated defense will work with the committee to make appropriate revisions and a repeated defense will be scheduled at the discretion of the committee. Students may repeat their defense one time. If the second defense does not result in an evaluation of pass or pass with revisions, the thesis (COMM 795) has been failed and the student is dismissed from the program.

The role of faculty and student visitors at the thesis defense will be determined by the thesis committee chair, but visitors are not part of the deliberation process and will be excused from the meeting at the conclusion of the student's defense. No visitors other than IUP faculty and MS Strategic Communication students are permitted to attend the thesis defense.

Until the thesis is successfully defended, a grade of "R" is assigned to each registered credit. Upon successful completion of the thesis, the final grade assigned will apply to all registered thesis credits. Upon acceptance of the final thesis by the thesis committee, the student must submit copies for review to the SGSR thesis editor.

Time Limitations

Masters students must complete degree requirements no later than five years from the date of earning or transferring credits unless the period is extended through student petition. Thesis students must be continuously enrolled for at least one credit of thesis (COMM 795) each semester (fall and spring) annually, through the graduation of the student or until the time limit is exceeded. See additional University Policies Governing Graduate Programs on page 18.

Effective fall 2017 for students admitted and students admitted after -- Dissertation and thesis credits will be assigned Pass or Fail as the final evaluation outcome for the taken credits and carry no quality points weighted towards a student's CGPA.

Ongoing Dissertation and Thesis students admitted "prior" to fall 2017 – Dissertation and thesis credits will be assigned a letter grade as the final evaluation outcome for the credits taken and carry quality points weighted towards a student's CGPA for the number of dissertation credits required for the program. "Extended" dissertation credits are not calculated into a student's CGPA.

For more information, view the view the Graduate Catalog: www.iup.edu/gradcatalog

University Policies and Procedures

University policy is the baseline policy. Programs may have policy that is more stringent than the University baseline policy; however, not less stringent than the University baseline policy. For questions regarding this statement, please contact Dr. Mark Piwinsky, the Program Coordinator, or the School of Graduate Studies and Research.

Academic Calendar

View the IUP Academic Calendar: www.iup.edu/news-events/calendar/academic/

The following University and SGSR policies can be found at www.iup.edu/gradcatalog

Academic Good Standing

www.iup.edu/gradcatalog

Academic Integrity

www.iup.edu/gradcatalog

: www.iup.edu/studentconduct/thefsource/

Bereavement-Related Class Absences

www.iup.edu/gradcatalog

Continuous Graduate Registration for Dissertation and Thesis

Appendices

**Master of Science in Strategic Communication
Student Advising Sheet**

Student Name: _____

Banner ID: @_____

Thesis Committee Identification and Approval Form

This form is due to the Master’s coordinator before the middle of the semester prior to registering for COMM 795. For students conducting thesis research in the summer, this is mid-term of the previous spring semester. Students are not permitted to register for thesis credits until this form is completed and approved by the program coordinator.

Date: _____

Student Name: _____ Student Banner ID @ _____

Student Signature: _____

Tentative Thesis Topic: _____

Thesis Chair: _____ Signature: _____

Committee Member: _____ Signature: _____

Committee Member: _____ Signature: _____

Master’s Coordinator Approval: _____ Date: _____

Signature Page

Dear Student,

Congratulations on choosing to further your education at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. The goal of the Master of Science in Strategic Communication is your success. So that your experience in the graduate program is the best it can be, this Handbook provides information that is essential to you. It contains information about the policies and procedures of the MS in Strategic Communication program. This document is a supplement to the [Graduate Catalog](#), the [Academic Policies](#) and the Thesis/Dissertation Manual prepared by the [School of Graduate Studies and Research](#). Policies and procedures contained in the Graduate Catalog provide the framework for your role as an IUP citizen and a member of our IUP family. The [Thesis/Dissertation Manual](#) provides a detailed explanation of deadlines and requirements for submitting a Master's Thesis.

My signature below indicates that I am responsible for reading and understanding the information provided and referenced in this student handbook for the MS in Strategic Communication program.

Student name (print): _____

Student signature: _____

Date: _____

Please remove the page from the handbook, **sign and date**, and return it to the Master's program coordinator by **September 1, 2020**. The Master of Science in Strategic Communication Program