The Ph.D. degree in mass communications is an interdisciplinary program offered jointly by the Department of Life Sciences Communication and the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

The program offers several internationally recognized areas of research and teaching excellence:

- health communication
- science communication
- environmental communication
- political communication
- risk communication
- social marketing
- brand communication
- public opinion
- international communication
- media processes and effects
- race and culture
- social and psychological factors affecting communication
- ethics, law and history

Working closely with their major professor and committee, students draw from courses offered in departments across the campus to develop a plan of study in preparation for independent and original research in their areas of interest.

FUNDING

Prospective students should see the program website (https://masscommphd.wisc.edu/funding) for funding information.

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM DEGREE REQUIREMENTS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

To make progress toward a graduate degree, students must meet the Graduate School Minimum Degree Requirements and Satisfactory Progress (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext) in addition to the requirements of the program.

DOCTORAL DEGREE

Ph.D.

MINIMUM GRADUATE DEGREE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

65 credits

MINIMUM GRADUATE RESIDENCE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

32 credits

MINIMUM GRADUATE COURSEWORK (50%) REQUIREMENT

At least 50% of the required coursework (33 of 65 credits) must be in graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university’s Course Guide (http://my.wisc.edu/CourseGuideRedirect/BrowseByTitle).

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: GRADUATE WORK FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS

In consultation with the student's advisor, and with program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 33 credits of graduate coursework from other institutions. Coursework earned ten years or more prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNDERGRADUATE

With program approval, up to 7 credits numbered 600 and above from a UW–Madison undergraduate degree are allowed to count toward the degree. Coursework earned ten years or more prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNIVERSITY SPECIAL

In consultation with the student’s advisor and with program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 12 credits of coursework numbered 600 and above taken as a UW–Madison Special student. Coursework taken ten years prior to admission to the doctoral program is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credits for non-dissertators; dissertators must enroll for exactly 3 credits

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COURSES REQUIRED

Attendance of both seminars in the joint seminar sequence (JOURN/LSC 901 Colloquium in Mass Communication and LSC 700 Colloquium in Life Sciences Communication) is strongly recommended for new graduate students.

Additional requirements are detailed in the Academic Policies and Procedures Handbook for Graduate Work in the joint Ph.D. program in mass communications.

DOCTORAL MINOR/BREADTH REQUIREMENTS

Breadth is provided via interdisciplinary training (minor requirement waived).

OVERALL GRADUATE GPA REQUIREMENT

3.50 GPA required

OTHER GRADE REQUIREMENTS

Courses in which the student earns a grade below B do not count toward the 65 credit minimum, but they do count in the cumulative GPA.

PROBATION POLICY

Doctoral students must do the following to maintain satisfactory progress:
1. Earn a minimum 3.5 cumulative GPA by the end of the second semester in residence and maintain that GPA for the duration of the degree program.

2. Remove grades of Incomplete in the semester following their occurrence. A course proposal cannot be approved until all incompletes are removed.

3. Complete preliminary exams within three to six months of completing coursework.

4. Maintain steady progress toward completion of degree, including final oral exam and deposit of dissertation. Fulltime students can expect four to five years; completion will vary for part-time students.

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

Doctoral committees must include at least two members from outside the Department of Life Sciences Communication and the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

ASSESSMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS

Doctoral students must pass preliminary exams once coursework is completed.

TIME CONSTRAINTS

A candidate for a doctoral degree who fails to take the final oral examination and deposit the dissertation within five years after passing the preliminary examination may be required to take another preliminary examination and to be admitted to candidacy a second time.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

No language requirements.

ADMISSIONS

Applicants for this program are expected to have demonstrated an interest and background in communication research by having earned a thesis-based M.A. or M.S. degree in communication or other relevant disciplines. The admissions committee, however, may accept other evidence of suitable preparation.

Students must meet the minimum requirements for admission set by the Graduate School. Applicants must submit an online application, GRE scores, a statement of purpose, official transcripts from all previously attended institutions, a CV, and three letters of recommendation. Letters of recommendation should come from people who can speak to the scholarly abilities of the applicant. International applicants are required to take and attain a satisfactory score on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam. Test scores must be furnished to the school before the application is considered complete.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- Articulate research problems, potentials, and limits with respect to theory, knowledge, and practice within the field of study.

- Demonstrating comprehensive and intensive knowledge of the theories, concepts, frameworks, empirical findings, and controversies in the field.

- Formulate ideas, concepts, designs, and/or techniques beyond the current boundaries of knowledge within the field of study.

Demonstrating a comprehensive and intensive knowledge of appropriate and relevant research methods and analytical techniques.

- Create research or scholarship that makes a substantive contribution to knowledge.

- Demonstrate breadth within their learning experiences.

- Advance contributions of the field of study to society.

- Communicate complex ideas effectively.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

- Students earning a doctorate in mass communications will foster ethical and professional conduct.

PEOPLE

Faculty: Professors Baughman, Brossard (LSC Chair), Downey, Drechsel, Dunwoody, Friedland, Gunther, Loew, McLeod, Mitchell, Meiller, Reaves, Rojas (SJMC Director of Graduate Studies,) Scheufele (LSC Director of Graduate Studies), D Shah, H Shah (SJMC Chair), Vaughan. Associate Professors: Kim, Riddle, Robinson, Shaw, Shepard, Wagner. Assistant Professors: Culver, Graves, Palmer, Stenhouse, Wells