

LIFE SCIENCES COMMUNICATION, M.S.

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum academic progress and degree requirements (<http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirements>), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

MAJOR 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 are able to complete a program with minimal disruptions to careers and other commitments.

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 30 credits

Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement Half of degree coursework (15 credits out of 30 total credits) must be completed graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university's Course Guide (<https://registrar.wisc.edu/course-guide> (<https://registrar.wisc.edu/course-guide/>)).

Overall Graduate GPA Requirement 3.50 GPA required.

Other Grade Requirements Students must earn a B or above in all coursework to count it toward the 30-credit total.

Assessments and Examinations The research/thesis track requires a formal thesis and oral defense; the non-thesis track requires a comprehensive report or course narrative, and presentation at the culmination of coursework.

Language Requirements No language requirements.

REQUIRED COURSES

The M.S. has two tracks students can follow: a thesis master's degree or a professional master's degree. Students choose their track during the program application process.

Thesis Track ¹

The thesis-based master's degree requires 30 course credits, six of which can be LSC 990 Research credits. The degree also requires a thesis based on original research.

The student meets with their advisor during the first semester of the program to outline a course trajectory for the next two years. In consultation with their advisor, the student assembles a committee of three faculty members. The student defends their master's thesis in front of the committee at the end of their program.

Course work can include classes in substantive areas other than communication. For example, a student wishing to become an environmental reporter might take courses in environmental studies. A student interested in health communication might take a nutrition or preventive medicine course. However, the complete program must have coherence and focus, and students should discuss all courses with their advisor prior to enrollment.

Code	Title	Credits
LSC 700	Colloquium in Life Sciences Communication	1
Communication Theory		3
LSC 720	Introduction to Communication Theory and Research	
or LSC 902	Public Opinion of Life Science Issues	
or LSC 625	Risk Communication	
or LSC/ ENVIR ST/ JOURN 823	Science and Environment Communication	
Research Methods		3
Graduate Level Statistics		3
Electives Based on Academic & Career Goals		17-20
LSC 990	Research	3-6
Total Credits		30-36

¹ These tracks are internal to the program and represent different pathways a student can follow to earn this degree. Track names do not appear in the Graduate School admissions application, and they will not appear on the transcript.

Professional Track ¹

This is a course-based master's degree (30 credits total) designed to prepare students for professional careers in science communication and related fields. Students in this track will usually not pursue a Ph.D. program in the future. In fact, many doctoral programs (including LSC) do not accept a non-thesis master's as a criterion for admission to their Ph.D. program.

The student meets with their advisor during the first semester of the program to outline a course trajectory for the next two years. In consultation with their advisor, the student assembles a committee of three faculty members. The student presents a course narrative to the committee at the end of their program.

Coursework can include classes in substantive areas other than communication. For example, a student wishing to become an environmental reporter might take courses in environmental studies. A student interested in health communication might take a nutrition or preventive medicine course. However, the complete program must have coherence and focus, and students should discuss all courses with their advisor prior to enrollment.

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
LSC 700	Colloquium in Life Sciences Communication	1
Communication Theory		3
LSC 720	Introduction to Communication Theory and Research	3
or LSC 902	Public Opinion of Life Science Issues	
or LSC 625	Risk Communication	
or LSC/ ENVIR ST/ JOURN 823	Science and Environment Communication	
Research Methods		
Graduate Level Statistics		3
Electives Based on Academic & Career Goals		20
Total Credits		30

¹ These tracks are internal to the program and represent different pathways a student can follow to earn this degree. Track names do not appear in the Graduate School admissions application, and they will not appear on the transcript.